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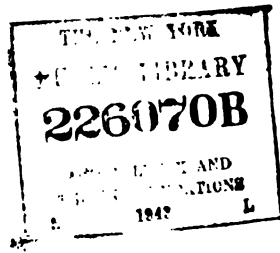
*A ROMANCE.*

BY  
ADMIRAL PORTER.

*WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY ALFRED FREDERICKS.*

NEW YORK:  
D. APPLETON AND COMPANY,  
1, 3, AND 5 BOND STREET.  
1885.

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AND  
ROBERT LE DIABLE

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By ADMIRAL PORTER



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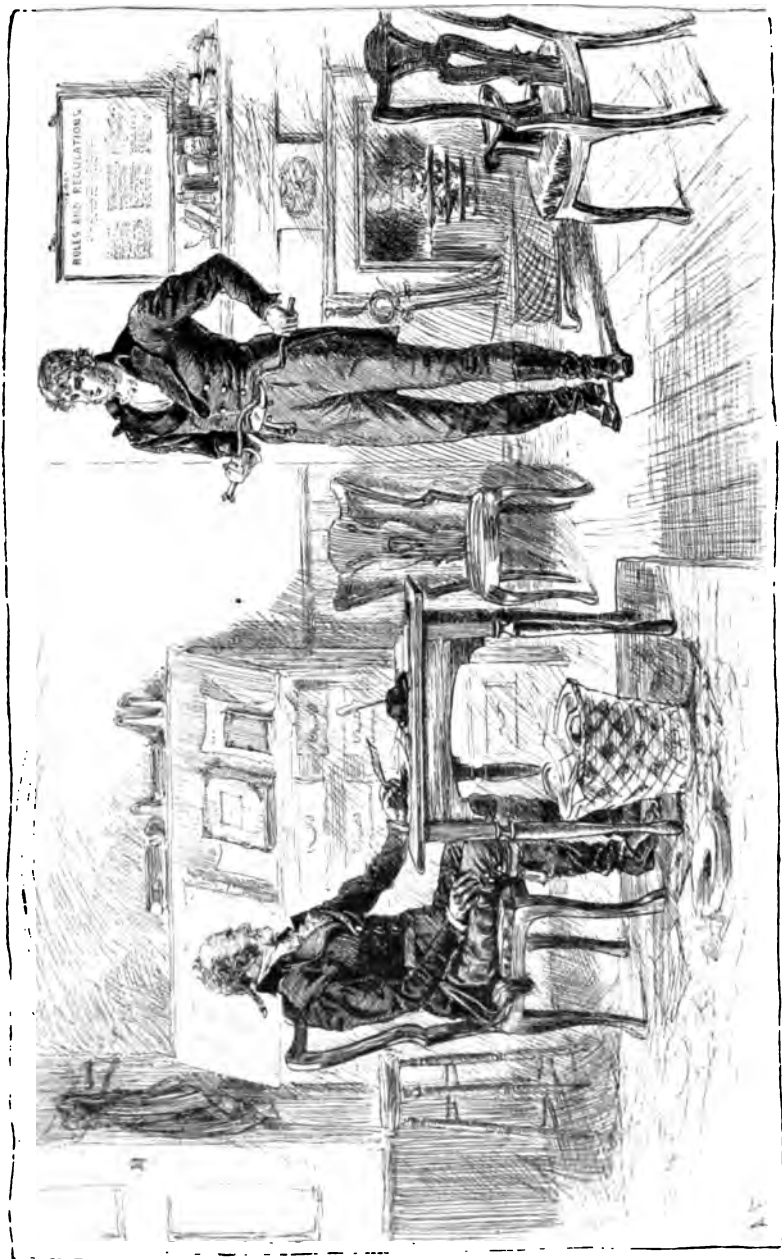
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He twisted the poker into a curl, as if it had been a light wire.

# ALLAN DARE

AND

## ROBERT LE DIABLE.

---

### CHAPTER I.

#### MANCHESTER-BY-THE-SEA.

A HUNDRED years ago there stood a small town on the shore of Massachusetts Bay called Manchester ; and this town still exists in almost primitive simplicity, surrounded by the most beautiful and romantic scenery.

At the time when my story commences the village of Manchester contained perhaps two hundred inhabitants, with now and then a somewhat pretentious dwelling raising its head above the smaller habitations around it. In these lived those who might be considered the lords of the manor, inasmuch as they dispensed all the patronage and owned most of the soil.

One wide street ran through the little village, which was indeed the old stage-road leading along the coast from Salem to Gloucester ; and along this street the houses were placed to suit the taste of the builder, without much regard to regularity, yet everything looked neat and trim, and proclaimed that, though the inhabitants of Manchester were not rich, they were comfortable and happy.

The town could boast of a grocery-store, which sold many things besides groceries ; an apothecary-shop, which, with its red and green vases, was a prominent feature of the street ; a public library, where the collection of books was small if not select ; a comfortable hotel, several little shops, and last, though not least, a simple church that faced the common, where all the inhabitants of the town assembled on Sunday to listen to the pious discourse of the

Rev. Mr. Peabody—some of the older members of the flock enjoying a comfortable nap while the parson, for perhaps the fiftieth time, labored over one of his favorite sermons.

Manchester to-day wears quite a different aspect from what it did a hundred years ago. It has increased in population, although still behind its English namesake, and is attracting notice as one of the most beautiful districts on our Atlantic coast; even Newport can not surpass it in the charms of scenery, or in the architectural beauty of the picturesque cottages that line the coast north and south of the ancient settlement.

But it is far from our intention to write a description of "Manchester-by-the-Sea." Its charms are known to thousands who admire beautiful scenery and who delight in a refreshing atmosphere. There the summer passes so quickly that the time to return to pent-up cities and stuffy houses comes before the summer sojourners are aware of it, and they tear themselves away from this beautiful country with regret too great for expression.

About two miles east of the village, by a winding road, a bold promontory, called "Gale's Point," projects into the bay, its rugged cliff seamed and worn by the storms of centuries. In winter there would seem to be little inducement for visiting this headland, for the nipping blasts from the Atlantic sweep over it with a force that almost lifts one from his feet; and even the wild sea-birds, as they flutter by with discordant scream, hasten on to some more congenial spot, away from the constant battling going on between old Ocean and the mighty rocks. At times the roar of the waves in these contests is audible even in the village of Manchester.

From the top of the promontory is a boundless view of the ocean to the eastward, while on the south the towns of Salem and Marblehead, with their white houses and cupolas, sparkle like gems in the coronet of an empress. To the northeast the view along the rock-bound coast extends as far as Cape Ann, and close by is Magnolia Point, dotted with pretty cottages, the summer retreats of those in pursuit of health and recreation.

These habitations are, however, the creation of modern days, for, at the time of which we are about to treat, the coast in this vicinity was sparsely settled. Railroads and telegraphs were unknown, but a line of ancient stage-coaches traveled daily between Salem and Gloucester, carrying the mail and a few passengers; and this communication with the outside world did not in all likelihood greatly influence the people or their property. The solid men of

Boston were not yet alive to the necessity of having a city home for the winter and a country home for the summer; and, if they wandered abroad at all, it was to the immediate vicinity of the city, where they could run to town twice a week to look after their business.

Railroads, however, have changed matters materially, and now Boston is represented all along the shore by lovely villas and gardens, spots which have no superior in any part of the country.

From the top of Gale's Point an old sailor might well delight to gaze out upon the ocean in its wrath—the unsparing monster with whom he has wrestled from his youth, whose breath has tanned his face until he looks years older, until his dim eye is troubled to tell a sail in the distance from the wing of a sea-gull.

Such an ancient mariner was Samson Goliah Gale, an old Salem merchant-captain, who, having retired from the sea with an ample fortune, was looking along the coast for a suitable site whereon to build himself a house.

As he stood alone on the bold cliff and took in the marvelous beauty of the scene, his heart expanded in fellowship toward his old friend, the sea, which had brought him wealth from out of its depths. He forgot all the buffetings received during the forty years of the vicissitudes of a seaman's life through which he had passed, until he became the wealthy man that he now was.

As he looked over the placid sea, a huge blackfish was sporting on the surface, as those animals are wont to do. The silvery spray, falling like smoke from a field-piece, reminded the old sailor of sport on a large scale that he had witnessed during his career, and he could not control his emotion. He fairly shouted, "There she blows, Betsy Jane!" For the moment he was on board his favorite ship (named after his wife), a vessel he had commanded for many years.

The happy incident of the blackfish decided Captain Gale to select this bluff as the site of his habitation; he came, saw, and purchased. It did not take him long to strike a bargain or a whale.

Old Abijah Flint, who sold the rocky territory to Samson Goliah, wondered, at the time, whether the old sailor was in his right senses in wanting to live in such an "all-fired out-of-the-way place"; but, when the purchaser laid down three hundred brand-new silver dollars, old Flint sagely reflected, "it wasn't no business of his'n."

Samson Goliah became sole proprietor of not only the bluff, but of one hundred acres in and around it, with many beautiful building-sites, a good boat-harbor with sandy beach, and as many granite boulders scattered over the territory as anybody could desire.

To-day the property for which Samson Goliah was thought to have paid an extravagant price is valued at a thousand dollars an acre or more, and is embellished by some of the most costly "cottages" in that part of the country.

Samson Goliah lost no time in contracting for the erection of a substantial dwelling on the summit of the bluff, about forty yards from its extreme edge, from which he could gaze upon old Ocean, as it rolled in with an energy that looked as if it were about to swallow up his new-bought territory.

In the course of a year the house was finished—a large stone building, fifty feet square, with a pointed roof, surmounted by a portentous weather-vane (the effigy of a whale), and the front door flanked on each side by the jawbone of a right-whale, which Samson had brought home from one of his cruises.

The habitation might well have been called "Bleak House," for never was there a more desolate-looking place; but Samson Goliah considered it, in summer or winter, a heaven on earth, and Betsy Jane, his wife, always thought as her husband did.

They found a good school in the village for their sons, Charles and James, aged respectively seventeen and fifteen years, and commenced housekeeping at the same time the boys began to grapple with the higher branches of their education. This was in 1783. In 1787 Samson Goliah and Betsy Jane celebrated the twenty-first birthday of their eldest son, Charles.

A year before this important event Mrs. Lagrange, a lady of French extraction, who had spent many years in England, came to live in Manchester.

She was educated and refined, and an accomplished musician. She was accompanied by two pretty daughters, tall, dark-eyed girls, full of animation and intelligence, who caused no little flutter among the young men of the village, as they tripped along the pleasant streets in their Paris bonnets and dresses of the latest fashion.

Charles and James Gale soon became constant visitors to the home of Mrs. Lagrange, a picturesque cottage on the outskirts of the village.

The result was what any one might have expected from four

romantic young people, and, in less than a year, Charles became engaged to Mary, the eldest daughter; and James and Agnes soon followed their example.

The engagements of the young people met with the full approbation of the respective parents, and both weddings were arranged to occur at the same time in the village church.

It was a clear night in December, 1790. The snow was lying deep upon the ground, and merry sleigh-bells were ringing their music upon the crisp air, while joyful hearts gave expression to their feelings in glad songs and shouts of laughter.

The Gale mansion, for the first time in its history, was illuminated from top to bottom, and figures flitting to and fro showed that something unusual was going on within its rather melancholy-looking walls.

Samson Goliath was sitting in the parlor chimney-corner in his easy-chair, smoking a pipe, while his wife was bustling about from room to room, preparing an entertainment of no ordinary dimensions, with the assistance of two neatly-dressed handmaidens.

"Betsy Jane," said Samson, "ain't it time we heered them sleigh-bells? Parson Peabody has had time enough to splice half a dozen couples. When I was married it didn't take more'n half so long to reel out the ceremony; but nowadays, with their hifalutin notions, they do take uncommon long."

"That's because you were always so hurryin' in your natur, Samson Goliath," said Betsy Jane. "Law me! I shall never forget how you hurried that old preacher through the marriage ceremony, and wouldn't say, 'With all my worldly goods I do thee endow.'"

"Ah, Betsy Jane," said the old man, "those were happy days. This wedding of our two boys with Agnes and Mary Lagrange carries me away back to those days, and I kin see you now, the pretty gal you was, with a figger like a clipper; and when you had your sky-sails and stun-sails set, well, there warn't nothin' that come a-nigh you. Do you remember when I first saw you blow, and gave chase? Well, if you don't, I do. It was exactly forty-five year ago this very day—the most memorable day in my life. That's the reason why I insisted on our young folks getting married to-day. It has brought me all my happiness in life, and, although I say it who shouldn't say it, neither Mary nor Agnes can hold a candle to what you was then, and I'm not sartin they can compare with you in figger now."

Betsy Jane, it must be observed, was a tall, angular figure, with



a mild, benevolent face. Her black eyes were still bright as in youth, but her hair was white as snow, and tied up in a knot, which was secured by a tortoise-shell comb.

As for Samson Goliah, in his sitting position he looked as if he might be any length. His legs stretched from one side of the fireplace to the other, and his arms seemed interminable. He was now, at seventy-five, a fine specimen of the old-fashioned whaleman. Hard as had been the life of the old sailor, and corrugated as had become his face through many years' exposure to the elements, his heart was as soft as a woman's; and if ever a man set up an idol to worship, Samson Goliah was that man, for he had given his whole soul to his Betsy Jane, and during his life had never swerved a hair's breadth from the allegiance he owed to the one whom he had sworn to love and cherish.

He may have hurried the parson through the marriage service, as Betsy Jane declared, but every word had been fixed on his memory, never to be forgotten.

"Betsy Jane," said he, "do you remember the first time I came alongside of you and struck you? Lord, how you reeled out the line, and how soon you got in the flurries! Ah, them were happy days. Do you know what I consider the great events of my life? Well, the principal was the first whale I ever struck. The second was when you said 'Yes' when I popped the question. Laws me, I danced round my room that night till all the buttons flew off my coat, and I kicked my shoes up the chimbley. I eat so much breakfast next morning, that mother thought I had got a promise of first mate in the brig Harpoon. Yes, I had the promise of a first mate, but it was you, Betsy Jane, and a first-rater you have been."

Betsy Jane's eyes swam with tears as she said: "You were a handsome lad, Samson Goliah, when I first knowed you, and you are a pictur now, for all your seventy-five years; but you were a worriting chap when you came a-courting me, and wouldn't let another fellow look at me. Don't I remember the time you challenged Andy Graham to fight with harpoons, because he invited me to go fishing with him? Perhaps Andy might have gone out with me if he hadn't seen you, the day before, throw your harpoon, with fifty fathoms of line, right through the center of your old sou'wester. Ah, but you were a handsome lad in them days, Samson Goliah, and many a night I lay awake, fearin' you wouldn't ask me."

"Never in my life, Betsy Jane," said the ancient mariner, "did I take as much pleasure in keepin' company with an eighty-barrel whale as I have done in keepin' company with you. You have brightened the down-hill of my life in a way no other woman could have done. And then you have brought up our two boys as only you could do. It is true, Betsy Jane, I was disappointed at their not takin' to the harpoon, but it warn't their natur. They took after you, and your heart was always so kind that you could hardly let a chicken be killed, much less a whale."

There is no knowing how long this interesting conversation might have been continued, had it not been interrupted by the jingle of many sleigh-bells approaching the house. Samson Goliah and his wife hurried to the front door to welcome the wedding party, who were making the welkin ring with their merriment. Never were there a handsomer or merrier pair of brides and grooms than those now assembled in the parlor. The brides' cheeks glowed with excitement and the cold air, and old Samson Goliah and Betsy Jane covered them with kisses, while the grooms came in for their full share of the embraces.

"You have made a good strike, boys," said Samson Goliah, "and reeled in your fish in ship-shape manner, but they can't beat your mother when she was a gal, and had all her stun-sails set. It carries me back to the days when I first see your mother blow, and I hauled up alongside of her," and the old man danced around like a young fellow of twenty.

"Order in the fiddle, Betsy Jane. A weddin' without a fiddle is like a lobster without a claw, or a sailor without a jack-knife."

There was a fair company present on this festive occasion; all the notables of Manchester were on hand, and even the face of Parson Peabody was wreathed in smiles, possibly in anticipation of the handsome fee that he expected.

No such event as this double wedding had occurred in Manchester before within the memory of the oldest inhabitant; and Samson Goliah Gale being reputed the richest man in town, rumor had run wild in dilating on the splendors of the wedding-supper, which it was expected would at least equal that given by the rich merchant, Eli Perkins, on the marriage of his favorite daughter.

The expectations of the guests were fully realized. On the festive board appeared roast turkey, rounds of beef, a saddle of mutton, chickens, ham, lobsters, and clams; game of all kinds; pumpkin and mince pies, and other New England delicacies far too

numerous to mention. In the center of the table appeared a large, sugar-coated plum-cake, which contained a gold ring. The young, unmarried ladies eyed this monster cake with great interest, for each hoped to be the winner of the prize.

The old whaleman stood at the head of the table and carved the turkey, while his wife served out the "apple-sass" and other concomitants, and, after all were properly helped, Samson Goliah ordered his old madeira, which he had hoarded for this occasion, to be passed around, and proposed a toast.

Smiling benignantly on the assembly, the old man said : "Ladies and gentlemen, here is my toast :

"To the whale that blows,  
The ship that goes,  
And the lass that loves a whaler."

The toast was drunk with great enthusiasm, to the delight of Samson Goliah, who kissed Betsy Jane many times. Then Parson Peabody arose and addressed the company. He expatiated upon the beauty of the brides and the intelligence of the bridegrooms. The sinewy frames of these young men the parson compared to oaks of the forest, made to protect the tender vines that would cling to them through life. He then paid a passing compliment to Samson Goliah and Betsy Jane, pointed out how beautifully their lives had been in accord, how faithful they had been to each other, like Isaac and Rebecca, and how the sunset of their existence was brightened with a halo of glory such as seldom falls to the lot of mortals. He called upon the sons to follow in the footsteps of their father, who, though he had not many years to remain on earth, would leave behind him a prestige of honor and truthfulness better far than earthly riches.

Often did these words come back to one of his hearers, when in after-years his eye was dim, his frame was bowed, and there was no spot on earth where he could lay his head with a peaceful conscience.

While eulogizing the two brides, the worthy parson paid a high tribute to their mother, who under his own eye had brought up her daughters in all the Christian virtues and intellectual accomplishments. He spoke of their mother's gentle ways, and her power of endearing herself to all those who knew her ; what a gleam of sunshine her presence had shed on the little town of Manchester, where people had to depend upon one another for that happiness

which could only be found in contentment, and the absence of worldly pride, that bane of modern society.

He implored the daughters not to forget their mother's teachings, not to follow after the follies and vanities of the world. He showed them how often husbands, through the weaknesses of their wives, were led on from one temptation to another, until they were involved in the maelstrom which carries so many to the bottom.

This, too, was remembered in after-years, when bitter anguish could not efface the memories of the past.

The worthy parson wound up with a eulogy upon Betsy Jane, during which deep silence prevailed in the room. He painted her pure and patient character during years of comparative poverty, the love she bore her husband, and her devotion to all his interests—her attention in sickness and in health, her love and care for her children, but, above all, the instruction she had given them in relation to their great Father in heaven, so that in fact they already stood before the world as upright, honorable men; and she, the mother, was well known in their small community as possessing all the Christian virtues, without fear and without reproach.

At the end of the parson's speech, which some people thought longer than was necessary, the violin struck up a lively air, and dancing began, which was continued until midnight, a very late hour in those old days. All the visitors went home in the highest spirits, and silence reigned around the solemn-looking mansion of old Captain Gale.

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## CHAPTER II.

### NEW PROSPECTS.

WE have brought some of the principal characters in our story to the front as briefly as possible, the early portion of their lives not possessing much importance in connection with the events to be hereafter related.

At the time of their marriage, Charles Gale was twenty-four years of age and his brother James twenty-two. Both were youths of fine natural ability, and seemed calculated to make their way in the world in any profession they might follow.

Although both young men bore high characters, there were yet

shades of difference that would not appear to a casual observer, or perhaps come to light in ordinary business intercourse. Both were gay young fellows, ready to oblige everybody with whom they came in contact, and making friends in all quarters. But there was something in the character of James more winning by far than in that of Charles. There were an openness and candor in the former that the latter did not possess, although Charles was thought to be the most astute man of business.

There was no one of their acquaintance who would not have preferred to solicit favors from the younger rather than from the older brother, why, no one could exactly tell, for the shades of difference in their two characters were so slight that few persons could really tell where they existed. Some thought that Charles had too much of the quality of secretiveness, while others said that that was a good trait for a confidential clerk to possess, and that it would be well for James if he had more of this quality.

These two brothers were devoted to each other, and the younger looked up to the elder with great respect, although the difference in their ages was so slight.

Indeed, James never undertook anything of moment without consulting his elder brother ; while Charles, on the contrary, did not think it necessary to consult James on any subject. Both the brothers were tall, with well-formed figures, their muscles having been developed by plenty of healthy exercise, particularly by long tramps in pursuit of game, with which the neighboring woods then abounded, before the increase in the number of pot-hunters had made gray squirrels an almost extinct species.

The two brides, Mary and Agnes, were undoubtedly very handsome, and there was so little difference in their ages that a stranger could hardly detect it, but would suppose them twins. Both were tall, with fine features and luxuriant chestnut hair. Their dispositions were admirably suited to the men they had married, yet Agnes was the favorite with all who knew them.

No one could exactly tell what was the difference, yet James was considered the most fortunate man of the two by their friends, who yet admitted there was little to choose between the two sisters.

Both young women were the wonder of the country people on account of their superior education and accomplishments. Mary was perhaps more disposed to the vanities of the world. There was more of an attempt at fashion in her dress ; she was not so punctual in her attendance at church ; and she seldom missed a party among

the young people. She had not the same frankness and candor as her sister, and was not so well calculated to bear reverses of fortune should any overtake her. She had something of the secretiveness of her husband, perhaps caused by her intercourse with him, but it was thought by some who knew her to be a blemish in her character likely to affect her in after-life.

When people start together on the journey through life with their hearts expanding to all the finer feelings of human nature, how little can any one foretell the circumstances that are to influence their career ! The swift torrents of adversity drive almost unheeded over a character of adamant, while one of sand and clay is soon disintegrated by the simplest currents. How often do we find those who in early youth have given the fairest promise of attaining the greatest happiness, to be those who secure the least ! If we examine into the character of childhood, we may find there the seeds of immorality, which, if allowed to germinate, will produce disease in the mind as surely as the canker-worm will produce disease in the fruit-tree.

Ancient legends tell of a melodious lyre, not played by mortal hands, which charmed the world with its tuneful strains. Those airs from the ancient lyre calmed the souls of men and produced oblivion of all other objects.

The story of the ancient lyre is an allegory. It is purity that makes the heavenly music in the heart of man, that offers to him the waters of Lethe when adversity and trouble cloud the mind. It is love that drives the breath of fancied woes away from the fevered brow, and sends these foul vapors to repose in the regions where they belong.

There is a ceaseless melody in hearts pulsating with pure and mutual love—not love born of passion, which soon wears out, but love with reason, while the heart is attuned to those sweet sounds.

It was with such music that the soul of Agnes was filled when she wedded James Gale, and clasped his hand to march with him through life over the toilsome and wandering way that leads finally to the portals of death.

She only desired to share her husband's lot, whatever it might be ; to alleviate his sorrows, and have a heart on which she could rely when anguish should wring her brow—to joy with him in his pleasures, and feel with him in his pains, and, finally, after the vicissitudes of life were over, to surrender her soul to her Creator on the same day and hour that he did.

Agnes had no idea that she would ever be parted from her husband except for a few hours, which would appear ages to her ; and there was nothing she ever did that was not in some way connected with him. We seldom meet with such pure characters as hers ; they generally exist only in the pages of romance, but still there are such beings, and Agnes Gale was a living example.

There was a repose in the character of him who called this sweet girl his wife, that those who had studied him knew could experience no change. He would meet prosperity and adversity with that equanimity with which Christian spirits meet the events of life. He would always be prepared for all things, and would be a rock on which that young heart could lean at all times with the certainty of love and protection. She was the melodious lyre that charmed his existence. No cloud had ever come between them to dim their joy. No thought had one unshared by the other, and their souls moved in such accord that it might well be said angels touched the chords that bound them together :

“ And while the melting words she breathed  
Were by the echoes wafted round,  
Her looks had with the chords so wreathed,  
One knew not which gave forth the sound.”

Charles and James Gale were both employed in lucrative occupations, and were doing more than well for young men of their age. James was head clerk in a commission-house in Salem, where he received what was in those days the handsome salary of fifteen hundred dollars a year ; while Charles was principal clerk in the Boston Bank, where he received eighteen hundred dollars a year, affording him ample means to live in good style in the suburbs of the city.

After spending ten days' honeymoon with the old folks, Charles Gale and his wife moved to their new home, greatly to the regret of Samson Goliah, who declared the Gale house was large enough for half a dozen families. But in those days there were no railroads, and it was not possible to transact business in Boston and live in Manchester. As to James, he could easily drive to Salem in the morning in time for business and return in time for supper at five o'clock.

A year after their marriage Agnes presented her husband with twin boys, and about the same time Charles and Mary had a son born to them.

All these boys were fine children, with nothing in particular re-

markable about them except that each of the twins had a peculiar mark on the right arm just above the elbow—a sign by which they could at any time be identified.

As they advanced in life, the twins became a great source of happiness and amusement to their grandfather. They showed the wildest and most reckless character for young children, and, as a result, their mother was in constant dread for fear something would happen. Even at the age of five years they would crawl about the steep cliffs and wade into the surf, or get into some convenient boat and drift out seaward.

The children seemed to have a determined spirit in their little bodies that nothing could daunt, and their ardor in hunting up the most dangerous adventures was in no way diminished by the wonderful stories related to them by their old grandfather, who, with a boy on each knee, would talk by the hour about pirates, mermaids, shipwrecks, fights between whales and sword-fish, and of other marvelous things.

The result was the development of an immense amount of energy in these two youths. By their sixth year they had grown so precocious, and had performed such wonderful feats, that their old grandfather was perfectly delighted, congratulating himself that he had laid the foundation for two of the greatest whalemens the world had ever seen.

Their mother, however, took a very different view of the matter, and could see nothing in the headstrong disposition of her boys to comfort her. Their father, who saw little of them, tried to console his wife with the idea that the boys would soon expend their youthful energy, or that in the end it would probably take a more useful direction.

Matters were in this condition when the twins had attained their fifth year. One day, early in the spring, James Gale returned home unusually early, and seemed greatly perturbed in spirit.

Agnes was sitting on the porch, watching the placid sea. The fluttering sea-birds laved their pinions in the waves and screamed with delight to find the great storm-king was taking his repose. Birds that had flown away from a hoary winter were happily sporting beneath a kindlier sky, and the porpoise and blackfish were turning up their bodies from the depths of ocean reflected in the sun like spots of fire, heedless of danger, and thinking but of disporting themselves on one of God's loveliest days. Rosy Spring was rushing into the arms of May—that time when the prolific earth



swells with buds and sparkles with flowery meads, when the festooned vines begin to sprout, and tiny buds to expand into velvet foliage. The winding streams, overflowing with the April rains, pursued their way through verdant fields and waving woods, and not a cloud in the sky disturbed the serenity of the prospect.

It was on such a day as this that a temperament like that of Agnes would take the greatest delight in losing herself in pleasant reveries, and basking in the sunshine of nature that she loved so well. The air of the sea was to her as the nectar of the gods, and the glorious sunshine sank into the recesses of her soul.

She scarcely heard her husband's step as he came up the walk ; but the first glance at his face told her that something unusual had happened. She flew to meet him, and welcomed him with a kiss, while her anxious countenance showed that she determined to share with him his joys or his sorrows.

"Don't be nervous, darling," said James, putting his arm lovingly around her. "What brings me home is either good news or bad news, just as you take it. But come, let us go in and discuss matters with father, and be guided by his advice. What I have to say is too important to our interests and those of our boys to be lightly considered. The old man makes no mistakes in matters where good judgment is required, and he will give no advice which it will not be to my interest to follow."

Agnes trembled like a leaf even at these preparatory remarks. Her heart, but a moment before filled with joy, now foreboded every sort of evil.

"Well, James," said Samson Goliah, "this is truly a rare sight, to see you away from your desk at this time o' day. What's up?"

James hesitated a moment, and then said : "Father, I will tell you, in as few words as possible. I have had an offer to go out to Canton as head clerk to the firm of Russell & Perkins, with a salary of five thousand dollars a year."

Here Agnes sprang up and threw her arms around his neck. "I will go with you," she said ; "you can't go without me and the boys."

"Ah, darling," said James, "that's the trouble : you can't go now ; but I will come back for you if matters turn out as I hope, and I find the climate one in which you can live and preserve your health. Besides, it's not yet settled that I am to go. If you object, I shall give the matter up at once, although it's a great opening—one which a young man of my age had no right to expect."

The tears rained from Agnes's eyes, and she clung convulsively to her husband as if some one were trying to snatch him away from her. "O James," she cried, "I can not part with you; it will kill me; and I know we shall never meet again! I must go with you, withersoever you go. I married you never to part, and I shall die if you exact this parting from me."

James was too much overcome to speak without shedding tears. He was quite unmanned, and looked at his father appealingly, as if to say, What shall I do?

Old Samson Goliah was not himself free from agitation, but he took in the situation in a moment, and braced himself up to meet what to him would be personal pain, but which his sound sense told him would be a great advantage to his son.

In those days American mercantile houses were few in China; and it was a source of great pride to the old sailor to think that one of his sons had been selected to fill so important a trust as head clerk, a place that many old Boston clerks had sought in vain. The old man realized that, in this parting from his son, he would never look upon him again; for Samson Goliah was a very old man, though hale and hearty. He had passed his eighty-second birthday; but his eye was as bright, his cheek as ruddy, and his limbs as sturdy, as those of many men of sixty. His had not been a life of dissipation; he had always lived after God's ordinances, and had ever practiced the greatest sobriety and temperance in all things. He had, in fact, led a natural life, and nursed his energies, so that in old age he was free from the infirmities that usually fall to the lot of elderly people.

His heart was, however, as soft as a woman's, and he was overflowing with affection for those who formed the little circle around him. He loved his two sons with a fervency seldom equaled, and, while he consulted his own comfort and happiness in having them near him and about him, so as to enjoy their society, yet he felt a lively interest in all that concerned their welfare.

It took him some minutes to recover from his agitation at the affecting scene before him. He could not help recalling the many partings he had undergone from his beloved wife, and he could sympathize deeply with the two young people now bathed in tears.

"Tut, tut, Agnes!" he said, kindly; "come, be a woman, and don't give way to tears over an event that most women would be delighted at. Give the boy line and let him sound; he'll come up again all right, you may depend upon it. He has an opportunity

to make a fortune—an opportunity that don't offer every day; and, by way of insuring his success, I intend to give him, when he starts for China, ten thousand dollars with which to speculate as occasion offers. And I know him so well that I am sure, with the opportunities that will be open to him, that he will return home in a few years as rich as a nabob, even though his liver may be a trifle out of order. He'll bring home ten eighty-barrel whales under hatches, as sure as a mackerel returns to its birthplace."

"But, father," sobbed Agnes, "how am I to stand such a separation? It will kill me!" and she burst into a fresh fit of weeping.

"No, child," said the old man; "the Lord tempers the wind to the shorn lamb, and he will give you strength to bear up against a separation which will result in a great benefit to your husband and your children. In less than a year you will be able to follow James to China; but you could not go at present, as you well know. When the time comes, if need be, Betsy Jane and I will go with you. I should like to take one more short cruise before I run out to the end of my cable; and if on the voyage I occasionally see a whale spout, it will more than pay me for the trouble and expense I shall encounter. Now, there's a bargain. Agnes, stop crying, and set to packing your husband's trunk, for he must be in Boston day after to-morrow. You shall go down and see the last of him, and Betsy Jane and I will go with you and bring you back."

Betsy Jane was called in and the case stated to her; and, after a hearty cry on her part, she backed up her husband's arguments, and Agnes resigned herself to her fate.

James and Agnes had little time for further discussion, as he had to return immediately to Salem and give his final answer to those who had offered him the situation. Those were not the days when the wires flashed information to the ends of the earth, and the mail only came to Manchester three times a week.

So James embraced his wife, and, bidding her be of good cheer, returned to Salem, his heart aching at the thought of a separation that would keep him from her for many months, yet encouraged at the prospect before him, and full of hope that his wife and children would be well provided for in the future.

Meanwhile, poor Agnes went about the house with tearful eyes, preparing for her husband's voyage, and thankful that she had some object in view with which to distract her painful thoughts.

Two days after this the whole family accompanied James Gale

to Boston, where he embarked for China in the ship Plover. The captain was a jovial fellow, about forty years of age, and had the reputation of being a thorough seaman, and one who attended to the comfort of his passengers.

He promised Agnes everything she required of him, and then the fond couple bade each other good-by, as if they were parting forever, for both had a presentiment that their separation would be long and perhaps final.

The last farewell was said, and Samson Goliath led his weeping train to the boat that was to land them on the wharf.

There they stood watching the ship as she made sail and stood out of the harbor. In a few moments she was under a cloud of canvas, for in those days ships trading to the East Indies carried large crews, and something of man-of-war discipline was maintained on board. The wind blew fresh and fair, and the ship receded rapidly from sight.

"Agnes," said the old sailor, "let us go. God help me if I never see him again!"

Charles Gale and his wife had come to see James off. Charles had been intrusted by James with all his affairs, and he promised to receive and forward to Agnes all amounts sent by James from China, and to invest such moneys as he might send for her benefit. James's last words to Charles were: "Dear brother, God knows what may happen to me in the future, but, as you value my love, protect Agnes and her children in my absence in case of anything happening to father, and treat my children as you would your own." Charles promised solemnly to do as his brother wished, and thus they parted.

The cheering assurances of his brother dwelt upon James's memory many days after the parting, and brought him comfort when he would otherwise have looked upon the dark side of things.

## CHAPTER III.

## THE CONTEST OF THE SHIPS.

Two years passed away, and Agnes had received many letters from her husband, who sent the most encouraging accounts of his situation and prospects.

Five months after his departure, Agnes had been blessed with a daughter, a beautiful little rose-bud who delighted the hearts of all who looked upon her.

James had received full accounts of the new addition to his household, and had made arrangements with the captain of the Plover to bring his family out to him on the next voyage. They had all prepared for the journey, including Samson Goliah and Betsy Jane, and were waiting with happy expectation for the captain to name the day of sailing.

But about this time a fast-sailing ship arrived from China, bringing the fearful intelligence that the cholera had broken out at Canton, and was rapidly spreading through the Eastern world. For this reason it was necessary to give up the voyage for the present, especially as James had written to his father under no circumstances to attempt to proceed to China until advised by him that he could do so with safety. He said the pestilence was spreading rapidly, and that death was upon every side.

The disease continued to ravage China for over a year, during which time James still wrote of the impossibility of the family's joining him, although he did all he could to relieve their fears for his own safety.

All the members of the family naturally underwent very great anxiety. Agnes's days were passed in tears, and night brought little sleep to her weary eyelids.

At length Samson Goliah received a letter from his son that the scourge had abated, but that it would not be necessary for his family to come to China, as he himself was about to return to the United States on business for his employers, and would bring them out with him on his return to China. He wrote that he would sail in the Plover in a month's time, and said further that he had been successful in trade far beyond his expectations; that he had gone deeply into the opium-trade, and had realized some sixty thousand dollars, which was more than a competence in case he should decide not to return to China.

He wrote to his brother, saying that he would get two bills of exchange for sixty thousand dollars, one of which he would retain, and the other send to him by the ship *Morning Star*, which was to sail the same day as the *Plover*. As both ships were of nearly the same rate of speed, he supposed they would reach Boston at the same time.

Two years and four months after James Gale had left home, he stepped on board the *Plover* to return to Boston.

The *Plover* and the *Morning Star* were to sail on the same day from Canton with full cargoes of tea, and as in those days five hundred dollars was paid to the captain of the ship that first reached port with a fresh cargo of tea, and as the ships would carry all sail possible, and would frequently be in sight of each other, it was expected that the race home would be an exciting one.

The two ships lay not far distant from each other in the port of Canton. All sail was set on both to royals, the head-sails hanging loose from the head-booms, and the spanker hanging in the brails, the courses hanging by the clew-garnets and buntlines. Every square sail was set as flat as a board, and the sheets hauled home with the nicety of a man-of-war. Indeed, there was little to distinguish those East India traders from ships-of-war, except in the number of their guns, and in their crews, which amounted to about fifty men each, all told.

The anchor was at short stay with the head-yards braced up by the port-braces, while the sailors stood idly by the windlass, with the bars in their hands, awaiting the arrival of the captains of the two ships, who were transacting their final business on shore, and were expected every moment.

At length two white whale-boats appeared, throwing the water from their bows in a perfect foam, each captain trying to be the first on board. The men bent to their oars with a strength that seemed to threaten to break the bright ash in two.

As the spirited contest came to an end, the crews of the ships cheered lustily. The *Plover's* boat reached that ship's side a few seconds before the other boat reached the *Morning Star*. Captain Engle, of the *Plover*, was first on the deck of his ship, and, as he stepped over the side, he said to the first officer, "Hoist the gig, heave up, and away!"

Mr. Brent, the first officer, already had the boat's falls overhauled down, and twenty men were standing by to run the boat up. Before the captain reached the cabin, the boat was swinging at the

davits, and the click of the windlass could be heard as the sailors hove up the anchor with cheerful songs. Notwithstanding the captain of the Plover had reached the deck of his vessel nearly half a minute sooner than Captain Edgar, of the Morning Star, both ships tripped their anchors at the same moment, and both vessels fell off gracefully to starboard.

"Histy up, big jib, little jib!" sang out the Chinese pilot of the Plover, as the ship fell off enough for these sails to take. "Makee sich big topsail, putche him hellum midsky. Belly good! Now blacee lound foetopskill—ah, belly good!—putche hellum midsky belly little; makee square foetopskill—belly good! makee square big topskill an' missle topskill—so! so! belly good!—kiar all rightee! Misser Cappen, you payee me twenty-two dollaree all samee Melican fligate; suppose you come gen, me pilicky you all samee Melican sloopee war."

The pilot's important duties having been performed, that functionary quitted the ship, after wishing the captain, in his "pigeon-English," a good voyage and a happy meeting with his friends at home.

Both ships stood out of the river with the wind aft. Fore tacks and sheets were hauled on board, and the vessels began to slip along at the rate of five or six knots an hour.

After the Plover and Morning Star had made a good offing, had secured their anchors, cleared up the decks, and payed the chains below, Captain Engle ordered his first officer to call all hands to make sail, starboard watch on the starboard side, larboard watch on the larboard side, set all steering-sails except maintop-sail, set sky-sails and moon-sails, and get the water-sails out under the lower booms.

"I don't see our neighbor moving yet," said the captain, "and we might as well take the initiative"; but the captain reckoned without his host. Sharp eyes watched his movements from the other ship, and as the first man put his hand on the Plover's rail to spring aloft, the topmen of the Morning Star appeared in the rigging. The steering-sails from each ship went rapidly aloft and spread to their respective booms, looking as if bright wings had suddenly sprouted from the mass of canvas already set and bellying to the wind. Sky-sails and moon-sails next were set, and finally the water-sails; and in ten minutes' time the two ships were under a cloud of canvas, having set all the sail they could carry before the wind.

And now commenced the race in earnest. Each captain was ready to improve every honorable advantage that offered, in order to reach Boston first, and win the prize that awaited the victor.

The next thing was to set the watches, the first officer and boat-swain taking the starboard and the second and third officers the larboard watch.

The watch on deck now went to work to secure the boats and everything about the decks, so that, in case of a gale of wind, nothing would get adrift, the other watch meanwhile looking out for the turn of the sails, until the duty was thoroughly performed. After the watch on board the Plover was once set, the watch below was not interfered with in any way ; they could sleep or amuse themselves as they pleased, and were never turned up upon deck unless "all hands" were called, in an emergency.

There was no morning muster at quarters for exercise, as on board a ship-of-war ; in fact, none of the numerous drills and exercises that occupy so much time and give the crew of a man-of-war so little rest. In a merchant-ship twenty men in a watch is considered a large crew, although in olden times vessels in the East India trade carried larger crews than elsewhere, as a defense against the Malay pirates that infested the China seas. These pirates, taking advantage of calms, would often board and capture vessels, and, after killing their crews, would plunder the ships and set them on fire.

The ships of the British East India Company were all large vessels, heavily manned and armed. They preserved all the discipline of men-of-war, which in fact they were for all practical purposes. The pirates never troubled these ships, but on several occasions they boarded and captured American vessels.

After everything was secured for sea, the captain of the Plover made a short speech to his crew. He informed them that a prize of five hundred dollars would be given to the captain of the vessel that should first arrive in Boston, a fact of which they were already aware ; and that it was his intention, if he gained the money, to divide it among the crew. It wouldn't be much among so many, but they would have the satisfaction of winning the prize. He told them that they would find him always at his post, and that he should expect every man to follow his example ; that he would never trouble the watch below except in cases of emergency, but that he expected the watch on deck to keep wide awake, and ready to jump when an order was given.



At the conclusion of the captain's address the crew gave three cheers, and went to their duty in good spirits, with the hope of getting half a month's extra pay at the end of the voyage, as the Plover was a crack sailer, and Captain Engle one of the best seamen and boldest sail-carriers in the East India trade.

The first of the monsoons had set in, and a fair wind as far as the Straits of Sunda was almost certain. They were already skipping along under their cloud of sail at the rate of eight knots per hour, the breeze freshening all the time. If the ships had been tied together, they could not so far have jogged along more evenly. One would occasionally forge ahead, but a little trimming of sails soon remedied that.

The nights were bright moonlight, so that they could sail close to each other and often exchange hails, and, when too far apart for that, the captains would signal to each other with flags.

Each day latitudes and longitudes were exchanged. The water was so smooth that hardly any motion could be felt on board the ships, and the passengers spent most of their time in lounging around the decks, or in reading.

For three days the ships jogged on together without taking in a single sail, and then only the moon-sails and sky-sails were furled, because the wind began to pipe up aloft in a manner that cautioned the first officer to look out for his "light dimity," if he didn't want to leave it in the China seas.

On the eighth day the Island of Banca, between Borneo and Sumatra, was sighted right ahead, and, when the vessels came up with it, the captain of the Plover, in the hope of gaining a little advantage, steered his course to pass to the eastward, while the Morning Star passed to the westward, but, when the ships opened to each other again, they still preserved their relative distance; and so they kept on till they approached the Straits of Sunda, between Java and Sumatra, when the wind began to freshen. As the ships had to haul up to pass through the straits, all the port steering-sails were taken in and the yards braced forward. Then it was that the two ships began to show their metal. Stanch and broad as they were, they laid their sides low in the water until they had reached their bearings, and then they seemed fairly to fly through the water.

Before leaving Canton, the ships had been fitted with heavy oak outriggers to the topmast cross-trees for the top-gallant and royal back-stays. Preventer back-stays leading well aft had been fitted

to the topmasts, boom-braces to topmast steering-sail-booms, and preventer-braces to lower yards and top-sails. It was evident that these would have to be depended on if the wind increased much more.

After passing through the Straits of Sunda, without taking in a stitch of sail, the ships were kept off for the Cape of Good Hope, which it was intended to sight.

It was the tenth day after leaving Canton that the two ships passed through the Straits of Sunda, keeping away and setting their starboard topmast and lower steering-sails, and then fairly commenced a race to delight the heart of a sailor.

The ships were flying through the water at the rate of fourteen knots an hour, and the sails aloft were complaining terribly at having so much work to do.

Neither captain would take in sail first, although it is certain that, if they had been sailing alone, they would have been more cautious. Already the main top-gallant steering-sail-boom of the Plover had snapped off, and the fore-royal yard of the Morning Star had broken in the slings. Then the lower steering-sail outhaul of the Morning Star parted, and the sail was hauled down. The lower steering-sail of the Plover soon followed suit, and the two ships were just as before, equally matched in sail.

Finally it began to blow so hard that the two ships were reduced to their top-gallant sails, still carrying topmast steering-sail, with the boom-brace as taut as an iron bar. Then the Plover parted her foretop-gallant-sheets, the sail splitting to pieces before they could get the yard down.

The Morning Star, not to be outdone, parted her weather main-top-gallant sheet; but as the men had the weather-braces, clew-lines, and buntlines in their hands, the sail was clewed down and saved. This was rather discomfiting to the Plover's men, who had not shown as good seamanship as their rivals.

Sail was carried heavily for three days after leaving the Straits of Sunda, and had generally taken itself in. Sometimes it was saved, more frequently not, until at last the two ships were reduced to single-reefed top-sails, whole fore-sail and fore-topmast stay-sail.

They still made thirteen knots per hour, though the sea ran high and the ships rolled heavily. They were yet side by side, neither having, to all appearances, gained any advantage over the other.

Great excitement prevailed on board both ships, and it required all the prudence the captains could exercise to prevent them from shaking out a reef, though the vessels were already carrying more sail than was really safe. A gentleman named Derby, who had made several passages in the Plover, remarked to the captain: "Let well enough alone; another reef will bring your ship's bow under. If you had less sail, you would go faster."

"Good advice," said Captain Engle, who had a high regard for Derby's opinion, and did not wish to lose so valuable a passenger in his future voyages.

That night the wind piped louder and louder, and, when the passengers turned out the following morning after a sleepless night, they found both ships under close-reefed maintop-sail, fore-sail, and fore-storm stay-sail, still preserving in a remarkable manner their relative distances of the preceding day, and each seeming as if about to be smothered in a sea of foam.

At last the high land of the Cape of Good Hope was sighted, and it was hoped that, when this barrier was passed, better weather would prevail; but, on the contrary, the weather grew worse, and the seas ran mountain-high. At times the rain fell in torrents, and Captain Engle at length began to show signs of uneasiness. He had lost all interest in the race, and now rather wished the Morning Star would keep farther off; but for the present this was out of the question, as both ships were obliged to keep right before the sea. Close as they were, they frequently lost sight of each other, owing to the high seas running between them. Often, when they would descend into the trough of the sea, their sails would almost be becalmed, and when they filled again the flapping would sound like the report of a field-piece, and at such times it was momentarily expected that the strong canvas would be split into a thousand pieces.

Every expedient, however, within a seaman's knowledge was resorted to. Three-inch ropes were made fast to the top-sail yards, taken outside the top-sails, and set up taut to the mainyard. The fore-sail was strengthened in the same manner, the ropes being covered with chafing-mats to keep them from chafing the sail. Relieving-tackles were rove, and men stationed at them, and there were now four men at the wheel, and the first officer stood near to give directions. Men were stationed at the maintop-sail and fore-braces to be ready in case the ships should broach to or be brought by the lee, and both ships carried several lights at night, so as to determine each other's position.

No matter how the hours passed, there was no change in those lights ; they looked to each like the fateful *ignis fatuus* leading them to destruction. The nights and days were long and weary. No cheerful faces were to be seen about the decks, and it would have been a relief to those on board the Plover if the Morning Star had even forged ahead, with a prospect of winning the prize.

But, no ; there she stood day after day in the same position, like a phantom-ship, and those on board the Plover could realize, from the motions of their companion, how their ship, too, was buffeted about by the mountain-waves.

After passing the Cape of Good Hope, the ships' courses were changed, so as to sight the Island of St. Helena, and take thence a fresh departure. It had been four days since any observation had been taken, on account of bad weather, and the islands along the course had been passed unseen in the darkness or thick weather which prevailed.

After the vessels rounded the Cape of Good Hope, the wind hauled after them, keeping astern and blowing still harder, if anything, until both ships began to suffer from excessive rolling. At one time it was determined to heave them to ; but, as this evolution is dangerous in a heavy gale, the idea was abandoned, hoping that better weather would prevail as they approached the line. In fact, so great had been the excitement on board of both ships in relation to winning the coveted prize, that neither captain was willing to heave-to unless the other would do so likewise.

The captain of the Plover signaled the Morning Star, "Had we not better heave-to ?" The answer came, "No, not as long as we can run !" That settled the matter, and the captain of the Plover determined to run as long as a stick would stand.

A few hours later, however, Captain Engle was almost sorry he had not acted upon his own convictions ; for, in a heavy lurch of the Plover, the starboard fore-channels gave evidence of weakness, and one of the chain-plates broke short off. However, in less than five minutes pendent tackles were hooked and set up, and the ship bounded on her course as if nothing had happened.

Shortly after, the starboard fore-chains gave further evidence of weakness. A spar of proper size was then got outside the ship, chain-straps were passed around it, and on through the scuppers, and secured with a toggle on the inside. Additional pendent tackles were hooked to this and set up, relieving the channels and starboard rigging of all strain.

During this work the men were much of the time under water, holding on for their lives, the seas pouring in over the bows in a perfect cataract. The sight was grand, but calculated to appall those unaccustomed to such scenes of danger, and even the heart of the old sailor who commanded the Plover would leap to his mouth as he saw the huge seas following behind, threatening to engulf the ship and all on board.

It was now the thirteenth day since passing the Straits of Sunda, and both ships gave evidence of having suffered a good deal in hulls and rigging. The barometer had not fallen for some hours, and there was a hope that the storm would abate. In the afternoon thick clouds gathered in the southwest, indicating that the wind was about to shift.

This is one of the most-to-be-dreaded conditions of affairs a seaman can meet with ; for, with the wind coming from a direction that will cause a heavy cross-sea, the waves already running mountains-high, there is always danger of a vessel broaching-to, or being brought by the lee, with a prospect of losing masts and boats, if not the ship itself.

Captain Engle, however, braced himself to meet the coming danger, and during two anxious hours all hands were kept at their stations. Indeed, both ships were fully prepared for the squall, which seemed rushing rapidly toward them.

The sky was as black as Erebus. Flashes of lightning shot forth constantly, illuminating the ocean, and showing the storm-tossed mariners the dangers that surrounded them.

As the first breath of the tornado reached the ships, the orders were given, "Brace round the fore-sail and maintop-sail !" so as to keep the sails full, and "Hoist the fore-storm stay-sail !" all of which was done ere the full force of the tornado struck them. The braces and preventer-braces were hauled taut and secured, and it was thought that a careful management of the helm would preserve the vessels from danger.

The wind blew so violently that the Plover's maintop-sail was blown clean out of the bolt-ropes, notwithstanding the precautions that had been taken to prevent such a catastrophe, but the fore-sail still held on. The Morning Star passed through the ordeal apparently unscathed. It was now four o'clock in the afternoon, and the Morning Star was about two miles ahead of the Plover, and had been slowly gaining during the day, but not enough to discourage those on board the sternmost ship.

The spoon-drift flew so thickly that it was difficult for those on board of one ship to see what was going on in the other, but the officers of the *Morning Star* reported that, just as the weight of the squall from the southwest struck the *Plover*, she was seen to lie down on her side and then suddenly fly off, bringing the squall right astern, and the heavy sea which had been following her was thus directly on her starboard beam—the position which is called “brought by the lee,” the most dangerous in which a ship in a heavy gale can be placed.

Those on board the *Morning Star* further reported that the sea seemed to be making a complete breach over her, that the foremast had evidently gone by the board, and that the main and mizzen topmasts had been broken off close to the lower caps.

There could, in the opinion of these seamen, be but one result, from the position in which the *Plover* was thrown, and the damage to the masts and sails—that was, the loss of the ship, with all on board.

The people on board the *Morning Star* were horrified when they saw what had happened to their consort, and the men instinctively jumped to the braces, in expectation that the captain would give some order, they did not know exactly what; but the experienced seaman shook his head mournfully, and sang out: “Keep fast, boys; it’s no use—we would only follow her example if we attempted to haul the ship by the wind in such a gale as this!”

But the order was given to get in the fore-sail, which split into fragments as soon as the tack was started, which could be seen flying away to leeward like a flock of scared sea-birds seeking shelter in a more distant clime.

The wind was now blowing fiercely from west-southwest, having shifted five points when the squall overtook the ships, and, passing diagonally across the track of the original gale, it raised the most dreadful cross-sea it is possible to imagine.

The only thing to be done was to keep the ship as nearly as possible before the sea, and hope that the maintop-sail and fore-storm stay-sail would hold on to the last.

The *Morning Star* was a new and very stanch ship, of nearly a thousand tons burden, and evidently a better sea-boat than the *Plover*, for, although she was knocked about like a shuttle-cock on the angry billows, and oftentimes threatened with destruction, yet she always rose from her struggle with the elements, minding her helm with the nicety of a yacht. She seemed to bid defiance to all the furious onsets of the gale. Considerable damage, however, had

been done. She had lost all the boats she carried at the davits, and all her spare spars had been washed overboard.

All the sail she carried was the fore-storm stay-sail and close-reefed maintop-sail. To further keep the ship from broaching-to, some tarpaulins had been secured to both sides of the fore-rigging to offer an opposition to the wind in case the seas should knock her off her course, which was now directly before the gale.

The wind now gradually abated, and every moment that passed seemed to assure the safety of the ship, until midnight, when the seas fell into a regular set. The weather by this time had so moderated that it was deemed safe to lay the ship-to, which was done in the most seaman-like manner. The main try-sail was braced as the ship came up to the wind, and the fore-storm stay-sail was hauled down, and the *Morning Star* lay easily throughout the rest of the gale.

Soon after the accident to the *Plover*, the darkness of night set in, and it was impossible to see anything of the ill-fated ship. After running eight hours, at the rate of ten knots, from the spot where her consort was last seen, it may well be imagined there was little chance of the *Morning Star* seeing the *Plover* when day broke.

Not a man on board the *Morning Star* closed his eyes that night. The sailors discussed with bated breath the probable fate of those from whom they had lately parted, and the dreadful news they would bear to Boston. No one had the faintest idea that the *Plover* had escaped destruction, and the ship's company was plunged in gloom and despondency.

Nevertheless, at early daylight, the men began to creep aloft as well as the wind would permit ; but, on scanning the horizon, nothing could be seen to repay them for their pains—nothing but the wide waste of sea still lashing itself into fury, as if rejoicing over the victims it had swallowed in its insatiable maw.

Once a huge albatross came sailing down before the wind, and the seaman who had caught the glitter of his white wings sang out, "Sail-ho !" Every one looked in the direction in which the seaman pointed ; but the albatross was almost immediately close to the ship, and, poising himself for a moment above the deck, he was swept away to leeward by the gale and soon lost to sight.

All that day the men were constantly aloft, looking to see if the *Plover* would emerge from the dusky atmosphere which rested upon the horizon.

The night set in gloomy and with fitful squalls, and all hope of ever seeing the *Plover* again departed from every breast. The watch

below sought their hammocks—the first time in fifty hours—musing over the sad fate of the lost ship, and blessing their stars that they were on board so stanch a vessel as the *Morning Star*, and under the command of a seaman who so thoroughly knew his duties as her captain.

The gale from the west-southwest lasted three days after the *Plover's* disappearance. The *Morning Star* was driven a long way out of her course, and on the third day was within three hundred miles of Benguela, on the African coast. Then the barometer began slowly to rise, and the wind to shift round to the southward. A new maintop-sail and fore-sail were bent, and the ship was once more on her course under top-gallant sails, and running merrily along before a fresh southeast trade-wind, and, with the exception of the loss of spare spars and boats at the davits, looking as snug as if nothing had happened.

Landsmen who read accounts of storm and shipwreck realize little of the horrors attending such events. They see a ship sailing out of port, bound to distant climes, with all sail set “alow and aloft,” and picture to themselves the delights of the ocean. They are struck with the poetry of motion in the beautiful craft as she cleaves the waters, and imagine how free and happy must be the lives of those on board as they fly across the trackless ocean. Do they ever think of the peril to which those brave seamen are exposed in the storms that overtake them; how on stormy nights they have to climb the rigging and venture on the slippery yards; how they have to hold on for hours in the darkness of night ere they can get a sail reefed or a mast down?

Do they ever think how the seamen are oftentimes launched from a top-sail yard and drift astern, while with despairing voices they call for aid that can never reach them? What visions of home and loved ones pass through the mind of the despairing sailor, tossed on the angry waves, as he sees his ship leaving him to his fate!

What death on shore can equal in bitterness that of the sailor thrown from aloft, to buffet perhaps for hours with the relentless ocean? He may clutch the life-buoy which has been thrown to him by his friends, who are unable to give him any other help, but this is only a prolongation of his agony. Better far that he had sunk at once into the depths of ocean, than to cling to the life-buoy, from the support of which he must fall when the energy of life departs from him!

How few there are who, upon reading of the loss of a ship with



all on board, have the slightest idea of the heart-rending scenes that occur on such occasions ! Often the whole crew are launched into eternity without time to think, or to offer a prayer to their Maker. Some are in their berths, and awake only to be smothered in the rush of waters, hardly conscious of the fate that has overtaken them.

Some few of those on deck may be cast out into the raging ocean, clinging to some floating spar, to which they may lash themselves by pieces of rigging ; but who can imagine what suffering is depicted on their faces when perchance they are picked up dead by some passing vessel ! The sea is beautiful in its peaceful slumber, but dreadful in its wrath. Its depths are strewn with wrecks and human bones, but none can ever know the horror attending the last moments of those unfortunates whom the sea has consigned to premature graves.

After the gale had abated, and the Morning Star enabled to pursue her course, it was found that she had drifted to 5° 20' east longitude and 15° 30' south latitude. Now that the winds had resumed their original character, the vessel pursued her way without further trouble.

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## CHAPTER IV.

### SORROWS.

ABOUT this time—December 1st—the family of Samson Goliah were expecting to hear of the arrival of the Plover with their loved one on board. They confidently hoped to have James home on Christmas-day, and great preparations were made to receive him. Agnes said to herself, “This is the last time we shall ever be parted, and this Christmas shall be the brightest of my life” ; and she moved about the house with an elastic step and a cheerful face that bespoke the happiness she felt.

Old Samson Goliah was full of life, and was teaching the two boys all those accomplishments in the way of olden sports with which he hoped to dazzle the mind of the fond father on his return home. Betsy Jane had knitted a dozen pairs of yarn stockings, so that James should not suffer from cold on his arrival. All was joy and sunshine in the Gale house—such happiness as is only felt

by those whose simple and unpretending lives are wrapped up in those within their own circle, and whose finer feelings have not been blunted by intercourse with the world.

Man proposes but God disposes, and who can tell what a day may bring forth? Here were people who had never known real sorrow up to this time, with their hearts beating with the fondest anticipations; and yet within a month they might well beg to be snatched from the miseries of life, since nothing would remain to them but the hope of kindly death as a relief to their distress.

About the time of the loss of the Plover, Agnes's joyful anticipations were dimmed by the death of her mother, who was taken off suddenly by pneumonia; but this grief was soon absorbed in a greater one. On the grave of her loved mother she had spread a wreath of flowers, which she watered daily with her tears. It was her first grief, and to her it seemed that her soul would never again be attuned to pleasure in this world.

How little she knew then what real grief was, and that the time would come when her eyes would be a continuous fountain of tears from morn till eve, and that she would pray for repose in death as her only hope for a reunion with those she loved on earth!

It was two weeks after the death of Mrs. Lagrange, when the village of Manchester was thrown into great excitement by the announcement in the local newspaper that "the celebrated French circus of Monsieur Jonson would appear for two successive days in the village, for the benefit of the inhabitants of Manchester and towns adjacent.—Admittance, twenty-five cents. Children under twelve, half price."

Besides the circus corps, there was published a list of rare animals, including an elephant and its young one (Miss Columbia), which had charmed the whole country with its wonderful infantile performances.

Samson Goliath was delighted at the idea of giving his two boys such a pleasure as seeing the circus, particularly as a live whale and a walrus figured in the list of animals, to say nothing of two live seals and a stuffed shark. Besides all this, there was a harpoon that had been taken from a whale in the Atlantic, after it had evidently been thrown into him in the Pacific Ocean. Samson Goliath was fully under the impression that he was about to recognize one of the harpoons that he had thrown at a whale during his last voyage to the South Sea, and the old man anticipated the pleasure he should feel in showing his two boys this memento of his prowess

in the days when he could throw a harpoon ten fathoms farther than any other man in the whaling fleet.

The children could scarcely restrain their impatience until the arrival of the circus; and when their grandfather drove them into town in the old family wagon to see the big show-bills posted up all over the village, their delight was unbounded.

Even Betsy Jane and the "help" at the Gale house were infected with the circus mania, and it was decided that all should go except poor Agnes, who was too subdued with grief at that moment to think of worldly pleasures. The boys could not sleep at nights for thinking of the wonderful things they were to see, and were up with the lark in the morning, to see if any of the *avant-couriers* of the show had arrived; while Samson Goliah examined the barometer twenty times a day, to see what was the prospect of good weather while the circus remained in Manchester.

At last the eventful day arrived, and Samson Goliah, having packed all his family, servants included, in the big wagon, drove to the village, and safely disembarked the party at the spot where the circus-tents were pitched.

The largest tent had plank seats arranged around the sawdust arena for the comfort of the spectators. A concourse had assembled from Manchester and the adjacent towns, more than sufficient to crowd the tents to their utmost capacity, for no such event had taken place in that vicinity within the memory of the oldest inhabitant.

The grand performance lasted from noon till two o'clock, and was pretty much like what is witnessed in our day, only it was on a more humble scale. The clown delighted the children with his brilliant witticisms, while the ponies elicited shouts of applause at their clever tricks. Every soul was delighted beyond expression, save and excepting Samson Goliah, who failed to identify the harpoon as having formerly been in his possession. He even went so far as to denounce the harpoon as a fraud, and insinuated that it had never been in salt-water.

The circus ended, as all pleasures will, leaving the spectators highly delighted. Samson Goliah promised his boys that he would take them to witness the show again before its departure; but the next day it rained heavily, and the weather continued bad until late in the evening, when the grandfather, having been taken ill, it was decided that the circus would have to be given up.

This was a severe disappointment to the two children, especially

as the evening turned out fine, and the sounds of the circus-music were wafted on the winds to the heights of the Gale house.

While the grandfather was waiting in great pain for the arrival of the doctor, and Betsy Jane and Agnes were busy in trying to alleviate his sufferings, the two reckless youngsters counseled together, and determined to take the privilege of going to the circus alone. So at six o'clock they started on a run for the village, urged on by the sound of the music, which rapidly grew louder as the boys flew toward the tents.

At length they arrived, panting with their run and excited with their adventure, at the tent-door, and entered with a crowd of other children, who paid their twelve and a half cents.

The two boys were well known in town for their striking beauty, and their straight and sturdy little figures could not fail to impress any one who had seen them. There was hardly a day that Samson Goliath could not be seen going through the shops in the village with one of these little fellows in each hand, and he never was known to let either of them get out of his sight. What was, then, the surprise of the citizens to see the boys wandering alone about the circus in search of a place where they could best see the performance !

Most persons supposed that at least a servant was in charge of the children ; and the *grande entrée* taking place just as they took their seats, they were for a moment lost sight of.

The boys sat next the place where the horses and performers entered the ring, and this passage led to another tent, where the wild animals were kept in cages. In the middle of the performances in the ring, and while the clown was delighting the audience with his antediluvian jokes, the little fellows slipped away unnoticed (it was supposed to see the wild beasts), and it was afterward surmised that some one in the interior had beckoned to them, and offered some inducements to them to leave the tent they were in.

But, be the cause what it may, certain it is the boys were never seen again in Manchester after that night.

If any one thought again of the children then, they supposed that they had been taken home by those who had brought them to the show ; and, when the performance was over, each spectator returned home, full of the pleasures of the evening, giving no more thought to the matter.

The doctor had meanwhile arrived at the Gale house, and, in

the course of an hour, Samson Goliah was quietly sleeping under the influence of opiates.

Betsy Jane and Agnes had been so occupied with the sick man that they had forgotten all about the children, who they supposed were on the porch ; but, when they went to look for them, what was their surprise and terror not to find them in any part of the house ! The garden was searched, and a man with a lantern went along the beach, and among the rocks ; but not the slightest trace of the children could be found.

The mother and the grandmother now became terribly alarmed, until a servant suggested that the children had wandered off to the circus, attracted by the lights and music, and that some of the towns-folk had taken charge of them, and would bring them home when the play was over.

The servants were ordered to hitch up the horses and drive into town, to bring the boys home as soon as possible, for all felt certain that they would be found at the circus.

The mother and grandmother waited anxiously for the return of the wagon, but hours passed without any news of the boys. Agnes became frantic with grief. It required all the philosophy of Betsy Jane to keep from giving way to despair ; for it was the first time in their lives that the boys had been away from home more than an hour or two at a time.

No one can depict the agony of these two women as they listened for the sound of the wagon-wheels. Again and again the grounds and the cliffs were searched ; but all to no purpose, and Betsy Jane and Agnes mingled their tears together.

At length, about daylight, the sound of wheels was heard coming along the road. "Ah !" exclaimed Betsy Jane, "here they come at last. God be thanked ! I shall scold the little darlings well for their prank. No doubt, some of the neighbors carried them home. How thoughtless of them, not to let us know the boys were in good hands !"

Agnes said nothing, but stood looking anxiously for the wagon to pass the turn leading into the grounds, when, not seeing the children, she gave a wild shriek, and fell fainting on the porch. Her heart had from the first foreboded evil, and she was prepared to hear bad tidings of her darlings.

Betsy Jane restrained her feelings as well as she could until the coachman drove to the door. The only answer he gave to her eager inquiries was : "The children can't be found nor heard of nowhere.

The whole town's been lookin' for 'em. They was at the circus; but all of a sudden they was lost sight of, as if they'd a-been taken up to heaven."

The homely way in which the man told his story was anything but consoling, and Betsy Jane gave full reins to her grief, in which the whole household joined.

Meanwhile Agnes, who had been lying in the arms of the house-keeper, who was applying all the restoratives at hand, came to, and hearing the last words of the hired man—who remarked that "some folks thought the children had been stolen by them circus-people"—she uttered shriek after shriek so painful that it was enough to unman the stoutest heart.

The man's words had a terrible effect on all who heard them. In the midst of the excitement, Samson Goliath came upon the scene, very pale after his illness, his gray hair streaming from under his woollen night-cap, and an old camlet cloak lined with red thrown over his night-dress.

"Where's the fire?" he cried; "who's hurt? Gracious heavens, what does all this mean?"

"My boys! my boys!" sobbed Agnes—"lost, stolen! I shall never see them again!" Again she was overcome with grief, and sobbed as if her heart would break.

"Who says my boys are lost while I live to find them!" shouted Samson Goliath. "How did they get out without me at their side? And to think that I should be sick, and unable to help them!" and he burst into tears, and sobbed like a child. "Keep the wagon, and wait till I dress," he cried to the hired man, and, hurrying on his clothes, was soon ready to start in pursuit of his boys. Meanwhile the bereaved mother was carried to bed, where she lay sobbing her life out.

When Samson Goliath arrived at the place where the circus-tents had stood, he found that the company had departed, bag and baggage, at daylight, with the intention of proceeding to Gloucester, about eight miles to the eastward.

The old man immediately started in pursuit; but, on reaching Gloucester, he could hear no tidings of the missing children.

The circus-people had seen them looking at the animals in company with a man dressed like a sailor, and in their opinion this person had stolen them away. There were several fishing-craft anchored off Manchester at the time, the crews of which had witnessed the circus performance.

Samson Goliah spent two days in Gloucester, making every inquiry, in which he was assisted by the selectmen and citizens of the town ; for every one felt deep sympathy with the old man, and shared his grief.

After doing all that was possible to obtain information, and fearing to go home and face the broken-hearted women who were anxiously awaiting tidings, Samson Goliah chartered a fishing-smack, and started in pursuit of his boys on the ocean, determined to overhaul every vessel on the coast until he could find them.

In this search the old, gray-haired man, with attenuated face and form, became known all along the coast as he boarded vessel after vessel, claiming to search for his lost ones. In almost every case a ready consent was accorded him ; and if any master of a smack hesitated to grant his request to search the vessel, the old man's flashing eyes and wild expression soon satisfied him that it would be better to comply ; for in his right hand Samson Goliah carried his trusty harpoon, the last one with which he had ever struck a whale.

At last he was satisfied that the boys were not on board the fishing-fleet, and so he gave up the search in that direction, and left the smack, to follow the pursuit on shore.

Hearing that the circus company were exhibiting in Portland, he proceeded to that place, hoping to surprise them while in possession of his boys ; but all in vain. He heard nothing of them, and, after an absence of two months, he returned home, to tell his unhappy household that he could bring no tidings of the lost ones.

He found Agnes in a most pitiable condition. All day long she sat with the children's playthings about her, waiting for their return, with tearless eyes rocking to and fro, and never speaking to any one. The morning light stole over the trembling brook, the moon and stars shone brightly in the heavens, the birds sang in the trees, and the ocean lashed itself against the cliffs, but it was all one to Agnes. She saw nothing, for her mind was almost a blank, resting only on one subject—the loss of her darlings.

When Samson Goliah returned home after his unsuccessful search, his friends hardly knew him—he had changed so much. He was wasted to a skeleton, his beard had grown long and unkempt, and his clothes were in rags. His countenance had a vacant expression akin to idiocy. Those who had seen Samson Goliah but two months ago, roaming about Manchester with his two darlings,

would hardly have believed that he was the poor, old, broken-down man that now drew their attention.

We sympathize with men when overtaken with the decrepitude of age, but when to this is added grief too heavy to be borne even by one in the vigor of manhood, it makes our hearts bleed to witness it.

The poor old man tottered into the parlor, where Betsy Jane was busily engaged in her usual occupation of knitting, and flung himself wearily into a chair and looked into the fire. There was still that cheerful blaze which always welcomed him home when he had gone abroad in chilly weather.

The logs crackled and the sparks flew up the chimney, but nothing elicited a remark from the old man. He was indifferent to heat or cold, hunger or thirst. He had eaten nothing for two days ; but he did not realize the fact. A sort of instinct had led him back to the spot where all his joys had once been centered, yet he did not seem to know that this was the home he had so loved. It might as well have been a road-side inn as far as he was concerned. His mind was nearly a blank.

When Samson Goliath first entered the room, Betsy Jane raised her eyes from her work and wondered for an instant who this old man could be that entered so unceremoniously ; but she soon took in the situation. In her mind's eye she could see the dear partner of her life undergoing every privation in the search for his boys, and she knew from her husband's character that he had not even taken the rest required by a young person, much less what was needed by a man of eighty-four.

She saw death stamped on his face, and all the love which she had harbored in her breast for over forty years gushed forth in a yearning desire to shield and protect her grief-stricken husband.

She rushed to his side, took his head and held it gently to the fond heart that had never had a thought but for the husband of her youth and his interests. She kissed him fondly, and said : "Poor, dear husband ! Have you come home at last ?"

The old man looked wearily up, but did not seem to recognize his wife, who burst into tears and sobbed as if her heart had never before known sorrow. The tears falling upon his face seemed to arouse him to partial consciousness, and he said : "Have the boys got home from the circus, Betsy Jane ? It was wrong to let them go without me ; something may happen to them. Have the wagon hitched up, and I will go and fetch them. Poor boys ! they must



be hungry ; they've eaten nothing for two days, and there's a rough-looking sailor trying to steal them. Hitch up the wagon, —I must be off, Betsy Jane, or the boys will wonder why I don't come." And so the old man wandered in his speech.

"Oh, my poor, dear husband, and is it come to this !" exclaimed his wife, her heart ready to burst. "Can it be that your once strong intellect is clouded ?—O God ! spare me this agony. Give back the mind of the one I have loved from youth, or, if he must be taken, let me not live through long days of sorrow and nights without rest, with nothing to soothe the hours of grief but memories of a love that's lost !—Come, my poor old husband," she said, "rest your tired head on the heart of your own Betsy Jane," and she passed her hands lovingly through his streaming hair and stroked his furrowed brow until he slept, murmuring constantly, "The boys will come back ; hitch up the wagon ; I must go for them, Betsy Jane."

For over two hours the old man slept on his wife's breast, and his sleep seemed so sound that the hired man was called in to aid in transferring him to the sofa, where he slept for some eight hours longer.

His tender-hearted wife sat beside him watching every movement. At length, somewhat alarmed at his long slumbers, the doctor was summoned ; but he pronounced the symptoms favorable, and said that sleep alone would restore the old man's wandering senses.

When he at length awoke, he found Betsy Jane sitting by his side, bathing his brow. He knew his wife, and her heart beat with joy and her face glowed with a heavenly calm.

It would be useless to attempt to portray the misery of Agnes Gale when she was informed that the grandfather had brought no tidings of the missing boys, and her heart, already bleeding at every pore, sank to the lowest depths of despair.

There was still a small ray of hope that, on the arrival of her husband from China, a search, with the means at his command, could be instituted such as must lead to some result.

Time passed very slowly in the Gale house. Hours seemed days, and days lengthened to years. The coming Christmas was looked forward to with hope—hope that James Gale would arrive in the Plover, and devote all his energies to tracing out his boys.

It was necessary also for some one to take charge of the household, for Samson Goliah had fallen into a settled melancholy, and

was rapidly declining, so that in all probability another year would see him no more among the living.

Betsy Jane attended him constantly all day long. His pipe seemed to be the only resource now left him. He seldom talked, and then only to his wife.

"Betsy Jane," he would say, "I've been struck hard, and am nearly in the flurries, but give me line, lass, and let me sound—I may slip out the iron yet. Don't grieve; your old man is nigh on to eighty now, and God has kept us free of all calamities up to this time. We must shorten sail as squalls arise, and, by reefing in time, save our spars. I remember when you were young, Betsy Jane, and had your royals, sky-sails, and stun-sails all set, you were the prettiest craft I ever clapped eyes on. And now you are prettier in my eyes than you were even then. Don't grieve for the old man when he goes, but come to me as soon as your duty is ended on earth. I could not be happy even in paradise without you."

And so he would talk to her, she consoling him with all the love of a fond wife, and there is no greater blessing than that on earth.

On Christmas-day the Morning Star was signaled coming into port. It was a cold, stormy day, and the air was full of heavy sleet. As the vessel sailed up Boston Harbor under her three top-sails, she looked like a ship of ice from the regions of the pole.

Her rigging was a mass of sleet, her ropes were no longer of any use, and long icicles hung from the bights in fantastic shapes, sometimes dropping to the decks below, to the imminent hazard of the crew.

The sails were frozen stiff and covered with ice, so that no power could have furled them; and, as she reached her anchorage, the top-sail halyards were let go without clewing them up, the yards slowly descending to the cap, scattering the silver spray from the sails in all directions; while the top-sail-ties, which had not been let go for the last fifty days, seemed to object to letting the yards down to their natural rest.

The sailors, in pea-jackets and sou'westers, were covered with sleet from head to foot, and many of them were perfect representatives of the old vikings—

"Who, far in the Northern land,  
By the wild Baltic's strand,"

led a life of spoil and murder, wearing away the winter nights with

many a wassail-bout. But these were harmless vikings; for, when their icy armor was removed, they appeared simply as sturdy sailors, worn with the necessary toils of a long and perilous voyage.

The anchors were huge masses of ice, and, as the ship came within a short distance of Long Wharf, the ponderous mass of iron on the starboard side was let go, the chain flew out, scattering masses of ice that had collected around the hawse-holes, and the Morning Star swung heavily to her moorings.

The ship had come in in charge of the captain, who had been unable to pick up a pilot off the coast. All the boats were out looking for vessels needing assistance, and the Morning Star had passed them without seeing them or being seen.

When the harbor-master came on board, after the first greetings were passed, Captain Edgar asked if anything had been heard of the Plover, and was answered, "No."

This may seem a curious question for a man to ask who had seen the vessel brought by the lee and the seas sweeping over her; but it must be remembered that the Plover was indistinctly seen just before dark, and those on board the Morning Star could form no idea what damage their consort had sustained. She might have lost all her topmasts and sails, yet with such a captain and crew as she possessed they would be replaced in two days, and she was so capital a sea-boat that it was hoped she might have escaped the heavy seas that at a distance seemed to be overwhelming her.

They had talked it all over in the cabin and in the forecastle, and hope whispered that the Plover might yet get safe into port.

Besides this, three days after crossing the line, when the Morning Star was moving with every stitch of sail set that she could carry, a large ship was seen ahead under a cloud of canvas, standing in the same direction. The first officer, after looking at the vessel from the foretop-gallant-yard with the best glass in the ship, sang out: "I believe, sir, that is the Plover. She has a new set of top-gallant-masts and her top-sails are all new."

On hearing this welcome news, the crew gave three cheers, for they would gladly have given up their chances of winning the prize to know that their consort was safe.

The sails were carefully trimmed, and every effort made to come close enough to the vessel ahead to remove all doubts on the subject; but, although at first the Morning Star seemed to gain rapidly on the other ship, the latter finally took a fresh breeze and drew ahead so fast that she at length passed from sight.

Great excitement, of course, prevailed on board the Morning Star; and so assured were many of the ship's company, that extra pains were taken during the night to trim the yards and carry sail to come up with the unknown ship. This was in  $13^{\circ} 10'$  north latitude and  $48^{\circ} 17'$  west longitude.

Next morning the stranger was seen again from the mast-head; but toward sunset she drew away and was lost in the gloom of evening.

"I see how it is," said the first officer; "it's those new sails of hers which thicken up as night falls, and she pulls away from us."

The strange vessel was seen running the same course as the Morning Star for several days, and once a large piece of bamboo floating by indicated that the ship was from China. Still later, a cork hat covered with linen drifted by, and seemed to settle all doubt. But after that night the strange ship was seen no more.

Captain Edgar rejoiced when he heard that he had won the race; but presently he grew serious, and his anxiety increased when, on the same day, the ship Condor arrived from Calcutta and the captain reported that he had seen a sail in  $13^{\circ} 10'$  north latitude and  $48^{\circ} 17'$  west longitude, and that he had seen her at intervals during four days. On the fourth day the Condor changed her course to the eastward, which accounted for her not being seen again.

The captain of the Condor reported that six days after the time the Plover met with her disaster, according to the account of the Morning Star, he was sailing under close-reefed fore-sail and main-top-sail, and nearly run over a quantity of ship's spars, rigging, and sails, which, as near as he could make out, were the foremast and foretop-mast and lower and top-sail yards of a large ship. The masts and yards were bright, and the sails were floating on the water, attached to them. This settled any doubts as to the Plover's fate, for those masts and spars were like those the Plover carried when she left Canton.

Mr. Rice, a passenger who had made many voyages to and from China, had always asserted that he saw the Plover's foremast go by the board when she was brought by the lee, and all on board the Morning Star felt sure he was right until they fell in with the Condor, which they hopefully took for the Plover; but now all hands agreed that the Plover was certainly lost.

Next day a ship arrived from St. Helena, and the day after one from Ascension; both reported that no ship in distress had put into either of those ports, which would probably have been the case

had the Plover survived the storm and lost her principal spars and sails.

Thus all doubts were settled, and the story of the loss of the Plover, with many embellishments, appeared next day in the Boston papers.

The owner of the Plover, after a careful examination of the facts of the case, put in his claim for insurance on the ship and cargo ; and so satisfied were the underwriters of the vessel's loss, that they prepared to pay the claim.

When Charles Gale opened the morning paper, the first thing that struck his eye was the announcement of the Morning Star's arrival, and the news of the loss of the Plover, with all on board.

His heart stood still, for he knew his brother had intended sailing in the lost ship, and his name was not in the Morning Star's list of passengers. His doubts were soon settled, for on that day he received two letters in his brother's handwriting—one containing the draft for sixty thousand dollars, the other a few lines announcing that he was about to sail in the Plover. The captain of the Morning Star gave Charles Gale all the particulars, and assured him that there was not the slightest hope of his ever seeing his brother again.

Charles immediately posted to Manchester as fast as a swift horse could carry him, without even stopping to tell his wife the dreadful news—which, however, she soon read in the paper.

In three hours after leaving Boston, Charles Gale galloped up to the door of his father's house. As soon as his mother saw his pallid face and trembling limbs, she felt that some new calamity was in store for them ; but she little thought it was one in which her own son was concerned, but rather feared it was some news of the lost boys—that they had been found murdered in some lonely place. In short, she imagined some horrible thing had happened to them.

Charles fell into his mother's outstretched arms, trembling like a leaf, and unable to speak a word. He had been chilled to the bone in his bleak ride from Boston ; his limbs were stiff, and his eyes looked as if all the life had gone out of them.

His mother led him aside, and, though anxious to know the worst that had happened, she thought first of her son's condition, and went to procure some hot mulled-wine to restore the circulation of his blood. At last Charles became more composed, and, looking at his mother with tearful eyes, exclaimed : " O my poor mother, prepare for news that will rend your heart. Fate has dealt

us some fearful blows, but this is the hardest of all. You, who are such a good Christian, will perhaps bow to the decrees of Providence ; but poor father will, in his present feeble state, sink under this new calamity, and you must muster up all your courage to bear what I have to tell you."

"New calamity !" said Betsy Jane ; "is it not something about the children ? Are they dead ?"

"Not that I know of," said Charles ; "there is still hope of their return ; the rewards offered by father and his friends, and by the authorities, will, I hope, produce them soon. But there is one yet dearer to you and to father who is lost to us forever."

"O James, James—it is James who is gone !" sobbed Betsy Jane, "my own darling boy !" and she sank, as if dead, to the floor.

She had felt the loss of the children most deeply, but hope had all along buoyed her up. She was as if stricken by a flash of lightning, and her future seemed a dreary desert, with dark clouds impending as if to overwhelm her.

She grasped her son's hand convulsively as he supported her in his arms and tried to console her. "Be brave, dear mother," said he ; "do not forget that you have been the main-stay on which we have all leaned from childhood. You must be the one now to soothe poor father in this bitter trial. He is old and frail—you are strong. The battle of life is but brief at most ; let us meet its vicissitudes with the Christian fortitude that becomes us. Suffering humanity as a rule is steeped to the lips in misery. Think of the millions on earth who long for heaven, yet are afraid to die ! Let us pray for strength to bear this fateful potion of what we deem a calamity, but which perhaps may be a blessing in disguise. We have been too happy hitherto ; life has gone too smoothly with us, and has glided through the years we have spent on this lovely earth like a calm stream flowing over golden sands. Had we pressed into the cup of life more of the leaves that give it bitterness, and thought less of its fragrant flowers and silvery waters, we would be better able to bear the depths of woe which sooner or later all must encounter. Come, be brave, mother, and be our comforter, for your Christian virtues are not mere bubbles that burst with the first passing zephyr. They are strong as adamant, and in adversity it is your vocation to sustain those who have not your self-control and fortitude."

Betsy Jane raised her dimmed eyes to those of her son, and said

meekly : " God's will be done. Now, Charles, tell me all—you will not hear a murmur from me again ; I shall pray for light in these dark and terrible misfortunes that have overtaken us, and thank our Redeemer for his assurances of a perfect hereafter to all who believe and trust in him. Now, tell me all : I can calmly bear the worst."

Then Charles, in a choking voice, told her all the events connected with the loss of the Plover ; to which she listened in silence, her sobs being the only evidence that she heeded what he was telling her.

" And is there no hope of the ship's reaching some port where she can be repaired, or may not the people be picked up by some passing vessel ?" she tremulously inquired.

" No, dear mother, there is no hope. I have made careful inquiries on every point. The Condor passed over the spot six days after the catastrophe occurred, and saw the spars of the Plover drifting before a heavy gale, in which no human being could live in a boat or lashed to a mast. There is no hope, mother ; poor James was drowned, with all on board the Plover !"

Samson Goliah, who had been dozing on a sofa in the sitting-room, suddenly awoke, and, missing his wife, went in search of her. He quietly pushed open the door of the room in which Charles and his mother were talking. On hearing something Charles had said, the old man staggered forward, and, grasping his son by the shoulder, said : " What has happened ? Tell me my son James is not dead, and will return to me !" and he sat down on the sofa by the side of Betsy Jane, who took his head in her arms and pressed it to that faithful heart that had been its resting-place in all its sorrows.

" O dear husband," said Betsy Jane, " God has dealt heavily with us, and we have lost another of the links that bound us to earth ; but we have yet much to live for—our dear Agnes and her little girl. Think what she will suffer when she hears this dreadful news ! She will suffer more than all of us, if she lives through it. We must live, to cherish and take care of her and her little daughter ; and they will need all our tenderness and care. Be brave, dear husband," she said, repeating the words her son had spoken to her.

" Ah ! lass," said Samson Goliah, " my line is all reeled out, and God is not merciful to me at the last. How have I sinned ? Betsy Jane, you ought to know ! Have I done aught amiss in my old age, to deserve this punishment ? At the end of my voyage, when I

returned home with a full cargo, my owners rewarded and thanked me; but now, when my voyage of life is nearly ended—for I'm eighty-four, Betsy Jane—God heaps misfortunes upon me. Yet, I've tried to keep up with you, Betsy Jane, and walk in his ways."

Betsy Jane put her hand gently on her husband's mouth. "Hush, darling!" she said; "no one knows God's ways, or what may be his intentions. Come with me." And she led him to her chamber, where they kneeled down and prayed together; and when Samson Goliah rose from his knees there was a calmness on his face that his wife never expected to see there.

Then the old man made Betsy Jane tell him all that had been told her by Charles. After which he said: "I will try ~~for~~ sleep now; this has exhausted me." While he lay upon the sofa, Betsy Jane passed her hand through his hair, and his cares were soon forgotten in slumber.

No one can tell the sufferings of Agnes that night when Betsy Jane broke the news of her husband's death. The unhappy wife hugged her infant to her breast and wept in silence. She had gone through so much sorrow that she could bear all the additional ills that could be heaped upon her. Life she thought had no further joys for her; yet, when she prayed that night, she thanked God for all his mercies, and thought of Christ's words to the afflicted. She was so crushed in spirit and in body when she laid her head upon her pillow, that she sank into a death-like slumber, and remained so until the rays of the morning sun streamed into her chamber, when, looking in the glass, she found that her beautiful chestnut hair had turned gray; but she welcomed these premature gray hairs as a fitting memento to the one she had loved best on earth.

That night the old man became very restless, and, by the time the doctor reached the house in the morning, he had a burning fever. The fever lasted a week, during which time Samson Goliah was wholly unconscious; but at the end of that time the fever left him much enfeebled, but with his mind clearer than before. When he recovered his senses, he looked wistfully at his wife, and said: "Ah! Betsy Jane, the old man is going, and leaving life not altogether satisfied that he has done right in this world, else why should God punish him so, and make his last years pass so heavily? I don't remember ever having wronged a human being. I may have struck a whale or two more than I could barrel up, but that's all. May God forgive me! You'll come after me very soon, Betsy Jane, when you've done all the good you can for Agnes and her child."



"Yes, I'll come soon, Samson Goliah," replied Betsy Jane. "I don't want to stay long here after you're gone, and so many of my joys are buried in the grave. But be quiet, darling, and try to sleep," and she ran her magnetic fingers through his hair, and he slept; but it was the sleep that knows no waking, for in the morning the old man lay cold in death.

The early sun shone through the closed window-blinds, and cast fanciful shadows on the chamber-walls. Around the house was a peaceful calm, and all nature looked so beautiful that one might say angels had cast a halo around the spot. Samson Goliah had departed this life without making any sign. He had suffered many griefs, but the dew of heaven had fallen into wounds that could not be healed on earth, and God called him away while he was calmly sleeping, with his hand clasped by the one he loved best on earth.

Betsy Jane had sat all night long watching her husband; at length she fell asleep also, and, when she awoke in the morning, she went on tiptoe to the door to attend to the duties of the day.

As she turned at the door to look at her husband, a beam of light through the shutters illuminated his face. Her heart ceased beating; she felt a dread she had never felt before. Although this was not the look of death she had witnessed in other cases, she knew that her husband was no more.

It seemed to her that bright angels were beckoning him to realms elysian, and she almost felt pain to think he had parted from her with a smile lighting up his face.

Betsy Jane did not shriek or faint, but she gazed upon the object of her youthful love as if he had been transfigured, and then, approaching, she laid her hand upon his cold forehead, and said: "Yes, this is death! I will follow you soon, dear husband." Then she clasped his hand and rested her head upon his breast, while her tears flowed silently. Thus she was found by the housekeeper at nine o'clock, and led away.

Captain Samson Goliah Gale was buried, three days after his decease, at the foot of his favorite tree, a wide-spreading white-oak, that looked like the monarch of all the trees around. Betsy Jane could sit at the parlor-window and look out on her husband's grave.

All the people within a radius of five miles attended old Captain Gale's funeral, for he was universally loved and respected. All knew of the sorrows that had hastened his end, and all had sympa-

thized with him while living, and regretted him now that he was dead.

Samson Goliah Gale, though born in humble circumstances, was perhaps better known for his virtues than many who make greater pretensions. His was a character for youth to emulate who hope to reach a green and honored old age.

How seldom do we see, in fashionable life, old age so honored and respected that the world will step aside from its pleasures to pay a sincere tribute to its memory ! It may put on weeds and make a dismal show ; may drop tears abundant as the dews of morn, to be as quickly dried.

But the world will glorify him who, from early youth and amid the vicissitudes of fortune, can boast of duties well performed and days well spent, whose healthy spirit finds gratification in all the works of nature ; who hears voices in the whispering leaves—for such a one death has no terrors.

In that solemn hour, when the dying put up their prayers to their Maker, asking forgiveness of their sins, and not knowing upon what journey they may be bound, the angels sing their peaceful requiem around the just man's head, and fan his brows with their wings as he sinks peacefully to his eternal rest.

Such is the goodness of God to those who have kept his commandments and walked in his ways. Such a man was old Captain Gale, of Gale's Point.

Charles Gale and his wife had been staying at the Gale house all through the family troubles, and Mary was a great comfort to her sister amid her afflictions, which seemed greater than any one frail woman could bear. Within a few months she had lost her mother ; then she had been bereaved of her two children ; then came the news of the loss of her husband at sea ; and finally came the death of that good old man who had proved himself a fond father to her, and who died before his time, owing to the loss of his grandsons—for up to that period his stalwart form was like the trunk of the sturdy oak on which the wind spends its fury in vain.

At length Charles had to return to his duties in Boston. His wife remained at the Gale house for a time longer, but eventually returned to her home.

Betsy Jane lived along, calmly attending to all her duties. When these were finished, she would sit, in fine weather, beside her husband's grave under the old oak-tree, communing with his spirit

until the shades of evening warned her that it was time to re-enter the house.

She gradually failed, owing to the advance of years, and from a longing to join the husband of her youth in those realms where she hoped to walk hand in hand with him forever.

At last she had to be helped to the grave by the old housekeeper. One evening, when the latter went for Betsy Jane, she found her lying with her head resting on the grave. She was dead, with a smile on her lips. She seemed to say, "I have joined him at last, and we part no more."

Betsy Jane was buried by the side of her husband, and Agnes was again bereaved, for she had greatly loved this gentle mother-in-law, who had been to her all that a mother could be. The only thing that now chained Agnes to life was the helpless child, which depended entirely upon her for protection, and who had never known, and never would know, a father's love. But for this child, she would long since have given way under the mass of affliction that weighed her down.

But fresh troubles awaited poor Agnes. A short time after his mother's death, Charles Gale came to his sister-in-law and told her that he had been offered the same position that his brother James had held in Canton, which was very fortunate, as he would have been obliged to go to China to settle his brother's private affairs; and, as soon as he could settle up his father's estate, of which he was the executor, he must depart. Mary, he said, had made up her mind to go with him to China.

Agnes had encountered so many sorrows, that she met this dreadful news—dreadful to her—with gentle resignation, such as she had displayed under her other misfortunes.

Her sorrow was only manifested in the still hours of the night, when only God and his angels could witness her bitter tears. She knew not what was to become of her, or how she was to live. She had no knowledge of business, or what arrangements would be made, in the settlement of the estate, for her maintenance.

She had, however, felt confidence in Charles Gale, and was satisfied that he would do all that was necessary in the premises.

It was finally arranged that Mrs. Holbrook, the housekeeper, was to remain with Agnes until Charles Gale's return, which would be in two years; that one of the hired men was to be retained also, and a young woman as cook; that enough money should be deposited in the Boston Bank to keep up the house; and that a lawyer

friend of Charles would call once a month, to see that everything was right.

Instead of sailing from Boston in the *Morning Star*, which vessel was about to leave for Canton, Charles concluded to embark from New York ; and, after a most painful parting from Agnes, he and his wife and child took the stage-coach for that city, whence he wrote that he had engaged passage in the *Nimrod*, which was to sail in a few days for Canton.

When the time came for all those she loved on earth to be separated from her by the great ocean, Agnes's strength failed her entirely, and, worn out with grief, she took to her bed, where the faithful housekeeper tended her for many days with the most assiduous care. Even the cheerful prattle of her little Mary—so called after her absent sister—could not exclude the unhappy feelings which crushed her to earth ; for, on parting with Mary, she felt as if all the world had deserted her.

A week after the departure of her brother-in-law, a New York paper came to Agnes with a list of passengers in the *Nimrod*, among them the names of her relatives ; also a letter, by the pilot-boat, from Charles, bidding Agnes a final farewell, and describing the comforts of the vessel in which they had taken passage.

Agnes knew that she could not expect another letter from Charles and Mary in less than a year, unless the vessel chanced to put in at some port on her way to Canton, or meet some vessel on the passage bound to the United States.

It was a long time to wait, but she tried to be patient as the months went by without further tidings. At length, after more than a year had passed without any news being heard from the *Nimrod*, the newspapers began to speculate on the probability of her being lost. Finally, on a claim being made for insurance on the vessel and cargo, the underwriters paid it without demur. Where or how she was lost no one could conjecture ; but, at all events, the ship was never more heard of.

Perhaps she had foundered in some great cyclone, or struck some hidden rock ; perhaps she was destroyed by fire far from land, and, if any of her passengers or crew escaped in boats, they failed to reach the shore. In such cases conjecture is all in vain. No one can tell what fearful trials people who are "never heard of" go through with.

We lie in our beds during the stormy night, and hear the roar of the surf as it dashes on the rocks or sandy beach. We love to

listen to the murmur of the waves, and go to sleep with the booming of the ocean sounding in our ears. We do not often realize that a storm, which is music to us, is bringing disaster, perhaps death, to hundreds on the raging ocean; that this same storm, which is spending its fury upon our shore, marks a road across the ocean strewn with wrecks and drifting cargoes.

When the fleecy waves roll in upon the white beach, we little think what destruction they have wrought in the distance, and now laugh in glee at the mischief they have done, and, dancing over the sands, end their gambols by shrieking, in language only known to the spirits of the ocean, the sad tidings of the misery they have caused.

Those harmonious waves could tell, if they liked, how some ill-fated ship, her rigging all draped with ice, had battled long against their fierce attacks; how they had in very spite shattered the hull, while fierce winds broke the masts and rent the sails, until, crushed by the weight of ice and water, the vessel sank to those interminable depths which will give up their secrets only at the sound of the last trumpet, when all the mysteries of earth and sea will be revealed, and those who lie hid in the caves of ocean shall stand before the Father to receive their final sentence.

Listen to that sound of woe brought on the wings of the wind! It comes with lightning-speed from a hundred leagues away.

It is the last cry of the poor father, as he lashes his child to a broken spar, to save it from a more speedy death, while he submits himself to the ocean, daring the dangers of the breakers between him and the shore which neither of them ever reaches.

Only, perchance at daylight, some restless fisherman, who has no faith in the music of ocean, knowing too well the meaning of its treacherous sighs, stands aghast as he sees, lashed to a drifting mast, the form of a lovely child, its rounded limbs torn by the waves, its luxuriant curls mixed with the damp sea-weeds, its frozen eyes gleaming with looks of despair; while the fond father's form, bereft of life, is tossed to and fro among the angry breakers, while hungry sharks snap at his sturdy limbs, which but for these monsters might have borne him to the shore in safety.

Hark! what sound is that booming across the sea? It is the minute-gun! Another and another comes over the wild ocean, while the storms come down in all their force, and icicles hanging from the masts and shrouds gleam out amid the lightning's vivid flash! The rain falls hissing on the slippery deck, while the vessel, like a

frightened steed, trembles in all her timbers, leaping at every blast toward the rock-bound shore that waits to receive her in its cruel embrace.

No friendly beacon will burn on such a night as this, no friendly hand will launch a boat to save ; a boat would soon be swamped in billows frothed with rage.

The helmsman lashes himself to the wheel ; the captain sinks in the arms of death, covered with snow and ice. The ship drifts swiftly upon the rock-bound shore, which thrusts its fangs through the iron-bound ribs, and holds her there while overwhelming breakers wash from her decks all semblance of human form, save the lone helmsman lashed to the wheel, all stiff and stark, gazing with glassy eyes on the broken compass, as if struggling to head the vessel from the rough shore that he knew would give but bitter welcome.

See how the waves beat over the helpless vessel—those coward waves that spare not those who come within their grasp ! See how they gambol through the 'tween-decks and in the hold, throwing out the cargo, which becomes the flotsam and jetsam of the storm-torn beach !

These are some of the gambols of those melodious waves, whose music soothes us to slumber ; and it is only when we see the wreck, and follow the bodies of the dead mariners to their graves, that we can fully realize the treachery of the ocean.

The sound of the breakers at the Gale cliffs struck always mournfully upon Agnes's ear, and she would have left the place, had she any other home than this.

Here she was obliged to live, and there was still some consolation left in sitting under the giant oak, by the graves of those she loved, and thinking of the happy days of the past. She had lost everything by the sea. A sailor had stolen her two boys, and who could tell but what they had been carried to sea and ingulfed in the maw of that insatiable monster, the same as the others she had loved ? Yet, although she hated the sight of the ocean, and everything connected with it, here she must live.

Perhaps her children might yet return, although it was now two years since their disappearance. Perhaps they would remember their homes, and some day escape from their captors, if they were still living, and come back to their fond mother.

She watched for them by day and dreamed of them by night. She lived on, and hoped always. And here, under the kind care of Mrs. Holbrook, we must leave her.

## CHAPTER V.

## THE NEW DETECTIVE.

TWENTY years have passed away since we left Agnes Gale and her little Mary sitting under the great oak near the graves of Samson Goliah and Betsy Jane. Our readers must now accompany us to New York, a city which even then seemed destined to become the emporium of the western hemisphere.

In 1820 New York, it is true, was but a village compared with what it is to-day. The suburbs were mere hamlets. There were no gas-lights in the city streets, but in lieu thereof a few oil-lamps just served to make darkness visible to the belated wanderer, and perhaps to assist the housebreaker and foot-pad in plying their nefarious trade.

There were no railroads in the country. Street-cars had not been dreamed of, but there was a fair proportion of dingy omnibuses and rickety hacks to convey passengers from one point to another within the city limits. After ten o'clock at night few of these were to be seen, except, perhaps, around the Park Theatre waiting for passengers when the performance should be over.

New York was nothing like the city it is to-day; and the most far-seeing citizen of that period could hardly have imagined what mighty changes would be brought about in sixty years.

We well remember New York in all its darkness and filth, with its narrow and crooked streets, that have been swept away by ravaging but beneficial fires. Its dens of thieves were worse, if possible, than those of London or Paris; for when rogues could no longer thrive in the great cities of Europe, they emigrated to New York, where they could rob and murder with impunity.

There were no police in those days worthy of the name. The guardians of the night were often old and inefficient men, who potted about with lanterns in their feeble hands, which showed the thieves their every movement; and, when the streets became deserted, they went to sleep in some convenient doorway or boozed away their hours in a night-cellar.

In the days of which we write, New York city scarcely extended beyond Canal Street. There were few handsome public or private buildings, but any number of tumble-down rookeries that dated back to the Dutch dynasty, and were fit only for the flames. Now

the city extends to the Harlem River and beyond, with blocks innumerable of magnificent warehouses, and with private residences that vie with those of the princes of the earth.

In 1820 the wharves of New York were crowded with shipping, and many noble vessels might be seen flying the American flag ; but the wharves on the North River extended only to about what is now known as Barclay Street Ferry, and on the East River to James Slip. Brooklyn in those days was barren of shipping, as were Jersey City and Hoboken. There were a couple of slow-going steam ferry-boats crossing from Fulton Street to Brooklyn, and one from Jackson Street to near the Navy-Yard, and two ferry-boats crossed the North River between New York and Jersey City. In short, the New York of 1820 was a primitive-looking place compared with the New York of 1884.

As traveling in those days was difficult and expensive, it was little indulged in by the people. There were no great hotels, such as are now seen in all directions. The "City Hotel," on Broadway, just above Trinity Church, was the favorite stopping-place, and was generally crowded from basement to garret. Its caterer, the famous Willard, known all over the country, dispensed the most bountiful hospitality, for which each traveler was expected to pay what was then considered the exorbitant charge of two dollars a day.

It is not our intention to write a history of New York, which could not be done within the compass of an ordinary volume ; nor shall we endeavor to give an account of its progress in the last half-century—its millionaires and speculators, its magnificent buildings, its public parks and elevated railroads, and the thousand improvements that astonish the strangers that visit it.

We only desire that the reader should be carried back to the time when New York, although an important city, was but a village compared to its greatness now. Any one who had visited the place at the time we write of, and had not seen it since, would think himself in dream-land, and be prepared to believe that the wonderful stories of the "Arabian Nights" were not exaggerated.

Let the reader draw a line on the map of New York from the foot of Grand Street, on the East River, to the foot of Canal Street, on the North River, and he will see all there was of New York at the time we write about. There were some good houses building higher up in Broadway, but Bowling Green and its neighborhood were the resort of the rich and fashionable, and many wealthy people resided in the houses facing the Battery, whose



houses, once the resort of all that was gay and beautiful, are now turned into tenement-houses, or offices connected with the twenty thousand emigrants that come weekly from Europe to find a home on our shores.

The new City Hall was considered at that time a splendid piece of architecture, and its park was the boast of New York. On pleasant afternoons the fashionable people resorted to the park, and, alighting from their carriages, would promenade, listening to the music of some military band, no doubt imagining they were in a place only second to Hyde Park. But its glories have departed, and it has long since been overshadowed by the splendors of Central Park.

The City Hall was then the court of justice, where the mayor and the recorder, each in his appropriate sphere, carried out the mandates of the law ; and in Chambers Street, near by, might be found, without difficulty, by those disposed to appropriate the goods of others to their own use, the office of the chief of police, who wielded great authority, and who, if he had not the same power as the recorder to sentence, generally directed the punishment to be given to any offender that fell into his clutches.

One morning, in the spring of 1820, the chief of police was in his office, with a dozen watchmen and constables about him making their reports. Some twenty culprits were seated on a wooden bench, waiting for the chief to take up their cases.

The majority of these offenders represented human nature in its lowest depths of degradation, but two or three were young men who had been out on a lark the night before, and were accused of assaulting watchmen, breaking street-lamps, etc.

The chief of police gave most of them short shrift, and, being convinced in his own mind that they were a bad lot, he sent them up to the recorder, with a written statement of their offenses as they struck him.

The chief was a wiry, hard-featured man of about fifty, whose cold, gray eye seemed to look through and through the culprits brought before him, without a ray of sympathy for any human being.

He had a wife and family, and doubtless possessed some human affection, yet he looked as if it would give him the greatest satisfaction to send his nearest relatives to jail. Every time he condemned a prisoner he would take a huge pinch of snuff from a brass box, liberally besprinkling his ample shirt-ruffle—which was

picturesquely variegated with tobacco-juice, for he used the weed in all its forms, and was an accurate marksman with the spittoon for a target.

When the prisoners had filed out of the police-office, on their way to the recorder's court-room, the chief sat silent for some minutes, the constables preserving a respectful attitude near by. At length he said to one of them: "Look here, Charley, is this all you fellows did last night—picking up a lot of miserable devils not worth looking after? While you are haunting grog-shops, where this kind of vermin congregate, you lose sight of bigger game. If you think you gain a reputation for zeal by this sort of work, you are very much mistaken. You can capture a poor rabbit that is nibbling some rich man's cabbages, but, while looking for such mild game, the fox walks in and steals all the neighbor's chickens. In other words, while you are picking up a lot of poor devils who have drunk too much and who would go home and sleep it off if you gave them a chance, you never, by any accident, overtake a burglar. While you are hanging around drinking-places, the burglars are robbing houses, breaking into stores, bursting bank-safes, and knocking people down in the streets. I see by the paper this morning that last night four private houses were robbed, two jewelry-stores ransacked, one bank-safe burst open, and three citizens knocked down and robbed in the streets."

The constables looked pale when the chief enumerated this list of offenses committed under their noses; but the man addressed as Charley spoke up, and said, "That's hawful news, if it's true, yer 'onner; but them newspapers offen makes up that kind of stuff. I didn't sleep a wink all night a-watchin' every feller I seen goin' along the street."

"Nonsense!" said the chief. "I've had a detective go to all the places mentioned, who found every word of it true. There's a bag of tools in the corner there that the cracksmen left behind in the last place they visited. These fellows have bagged so much plunder they can now retire from business and join the church. They knew none of you could identify their tools to save your lives."

"Let me look at 'em, yer 'onner," said Charley.

"Oh, yes," said the chief, "look at them as much as you like; but you'll have to show more smartness than you've ever yet exhibited to find a clew from them."

"Them ain't American tools, an' they ain't Hinglish. They're forren tools, yer 'onner."

"Well, you ought to know, Charley," said the chief, with a grim smile, "for I guess, if the truth were told, you've used them at different times in your life."

This was a home thrust, for his comrades knew that Charley had served a term in an English prison for housebreaking, and had afterward been taken on the London police-force on the time-honored principle of setting a rogue to catch a rogue. After Charley had been shot once or twice and nearly beaten to death by his old pals, who were ever on the lookout for a chance to kill him, he thought it advisable to emigrate: so he came to New York with a recommendation from the London police authorities, and obtained a situation as constable.

Charley had been very useful in ferreting out burglars, and, if he had not captured many, he had made the fraternity so uncomfortable that they would sometimes suspend operations for a month at a time; and then they would break out with renewed ardor, much to Charley's disgust and the rage of his chief.

Within the past year there had appeared in the city a gang of daring burglars, who had spread consternation among wealthy housekeepers. They would enter private houses in spite of bolts and bars; walk into jewelers' shops and quickly penetrate the brick-and-iron strong-boxes where the valuables were stowed away; and they varied their pastimes by knocking down and robbing citizens after dark.

Nothing seemed secure against these rascals, and so far not one of the gang had been apprehended, or any of the plunder recovered. No banker felt secure, when he went home at night, that he would not come back in the morning and find all his money gone. He might have an extra watch for many nights in succession, yet in an unguarded moment the burglars would get into his treasure-vault. So it was with others. They might keep their silver in bank for months; but, if they took it home to use at a party, they were liable to lose it before the next morning.

It seemed evident that the thieves had accomplices in the banks, stores, and private houses; but none had ever been detected. Many gentlemen gave up wearing expensive watches and bought cheap silver ones, and left their pocket-books at home. But there were still plenty of imprudent men in New York who would carry large sums of money about their persons—won at the gambling-table, perhaps: so that fortunate persons were often made unfortunate before they reached their homes. They would be robbed almost to a certainty, and by a sufficient force to defy resistance. The victim seldom had

a chance to cry out; for, when he least expected it, a net with a *choker* attached would be thrown over his head, confining his arms so that no resistance could be made.

When the ancient watchman made his rounds, he often found one of these unfortunates lying on the ground with legs and arms secured and a gag in his mouth, but not otherwise injured.

Such was the state of affairs when the chief of police made his sarcastic remarks to "English Charley"—remarks which were intended for the benefit of the whole police-force then present.

"It's time this thing was stopped," continued the chief of police. "Here am I looking every morning like a fool when the news of these outrages is brought in, and a newspaper reporter comes for information and I can't give him any. Now, I tell you fellows, once for all, if you don't ferret out these rascals, and break up the gang, I'll discharge every mother's son of you. I hear that these fellows are even breaking into houses in the country, and have walked away with a lot of money and valuables in and about Catskill, where some wealthy people have built country residences. I have been applied to by the citizens up there for some clever detectives to help their constables ferret out the vermin; but I had to send back word that there is such a set of numbskulls on my force that I could give them no assistance."

"But, yer 'onner—" began English Charley.

"But me no 'buts,'" said the chief. "I've no time to waste listening to your excuses. Double your force by picking out the best men you can find to assist you, and I will foot the bill; but, by heavens! I must have one of these cracksmen within the week. When once I get hold of the end of a line, I'm much mistaken if I don't reach the other end before I let go. Now clear out, and remember what I tell you. I can find plenty of sleepy old watchmen who can pick up drunkards and vagabonds, but I want men who have sense enough to hunt down burglars and foot-pads."

When all his satellites had departed, the chief sat down to ponder over the situation of affairs. His eyes looked grayer and colder than ever. He looked into his snuff-box as if to find inspiration there, and ended by sprinkling half the contents over his shirt-frill. He opened huge bundles of papers and tied them up again, seemingly without coming to any conclusion, and at last sat with his feet on the fender, looking into the fire.

"Ah me!" he said, "I would give any money if I could fall in with a fellow like that French Vidocq I've heard about. I'd

soon rake these rascals out. But there are no such men in this country, and I doubt if there were ever any in France."

At that moment a loud knock was heard at the door of the chief's room; but he was so absorbed in thought that he did not realize the fact until the knock was repeated, when he called out, "Come in!"

One of his assistants put his head in at the door, and said, "A man wants to see you on important business."

"Who is he?" said the chief.

"He says his business is with you, sir," said the assistant, "and he don't feel called on to give his name to me, sir."

"Ah!" said the chief, "he wants to beard the lion in his den, does he? Did you tell him every one must send his name in to me?"

"Yes, sir, I did; but he looked as if he was a-goin' to throw me outer the winder, which I'm sure he's quite able to do. You never saw such a man, sir."

"Poltroon!" exclaimed the chief. "Send him in here—I'll soon settle him."

"Yes, sir," said the constable, who murmured, as he walked away, "You wouldn't be a mouthful for him if he got his dander up."

A moment after, the stranger entered the office, and the chief, who was ready to rebuke him for his impertinence, opened his eyes in astonishment.

The new-comer was one of the handsomest men the chief had ever beheld. His features were perfect, with blue eyes, brown hair, and Saxon complexion, and his form was worthy of Achilles. He was over six feet high, and his whole person was so splendidly developed that a beholder would say, "This is a perfect figure of a man." He wore a full beard, and was dressed in a plain suit of brown cloth. He bowed gracefully to the chief, removing his hat as he entered the room.

Plain and unassuming as was this person's attire, he yet had the air of a gentleman, though his large, shapely hand gave evidence that it could toil when occasion required, and was unaccustomed to fashionable gloves.

The stranger began the conversation by saying, "Have I the honor of addressing the chief of police, of whose reputation I have heard the most flattering accounts?"

"I don't know that there is any particular honor, young man, in making my acquaintance; but you see what is left of a person

who once claimed to understand his business, but who, within the last month or so, has come to the conclusion that he has mistaken his calling, and is about ready to resign his office into abler hands."

Before the stranger entered, the chief had resolved to give him a wholesome rebuke for his haughty bearing toward the constable; but something in the intruder's looks fascinated him, and he was now ready not only to forgive the young man, but disposed to make him a confidant of his troubles.

"If," said the chief, "you have called out of mere curiosity to see one who has a greater reputation than he deserves, I must tell you I am so much occupied that I have very little time to spare; but if you have any business with me, I will listen patiently to you. I have noticed, however, that persons who make me complimentary visits have generally some favor in the background which they want to ask. You do not look like a man who would want to place himself under obligations, or would ask a favor for which he could not give a full equivalent. May I ask your name and business?"

"My name is Allan Dare," said the stranger, "and I am an applicant for a position on your detective force, if you have a place for me."

"You a detective!" exclaimed the chief, in astonishment. "Why, you look like a gentleman, and have none of the qualifications of a detective. Why, sir, your face would deceive no one, and a detective must be able to assume any number of disguises, which I am sure you couldn't do. The men for detectives are wiry fellows, who can alter their figures at will; they can grow fat in ten minutes by padding, and, by putting on shoes with two-inch heels, no one in the world would know them."

"Very true, sir," said the stranger, "but I have lately been a careful observer of the methods of your New York detectives. In the first place, there are very few of them; they are subordinate to the constables, and I can recognize any of them, dress as they may. Now I'll wager my life that I will assume a dozen costumes in which none of them will recognize me as the same man."

"You speak at random," said the chief. "But where have you been educated in the science of detection, for it is as much a science as any other?"

"Well, sir," said Allan Dare, "I will tell you. I have been five years on the detective force in Paris, and one year on that of London, and I bring with me letters from the authorities of those cities regarding my abilities in the detective line. I do not alto-

gether follow the business from necessity, but because my tastes lie in that way. I love to get hold of a tangled web and unravel it, and I have been very successful in France and England in unraveling some deep-laid burglaries and other villainous schemes."

"Then," said the chief, "you must be a young Le Coque. Do you know, just before you came in I wished I had some man on my force like Le Coque? Some good fairy must have heard me, and sent you here. But appearances are too often deceitful, and, although I have allowed myself to be won over by your advances and have treated you with less ceremony than I generally treat strangers, you mustn't expect me to place full confidence in you until I have some proof of your powers. My business makes me suspicious, and I see something to distrust in every man that approaches me. There is not one in my whole force to whom I give my confidence."

"That's because they don't deserve it," said Allan Dare, "and it's the best proof of your powers of penetration. Our worst enemies are often found within our own homes, and the greatest traitors are sometimes the most trusted soldiers. We do not suspect them, because we are blind to their imperfections, and do not find them out until we are betrayed. You haven't a man of honor on your force. They are all sordid men, working for low wages, and are open to bribery from the first man they arrest, who can probably pay them more money in a minute than you would give them in a month. Any kind of work requiring brains is better done by a gentleman than by a common man, on the same principle that a blooded horse will endure more than a common scrub. Now, referring to your police-force, there is a man on it named Charley, whom I knew in England. He was called there Joe Mizzler, alias the 'Smasher,' on the ground that he could break open any strong box in the country. He could hardly ever be found when wanted, and, if he was found, generally managed to prove an alibi. I know exactly what English Charley is fit for, as I have employed him and paid him well for his work."

"Then Charley knows you?" said the chief. "That's bad."

"No, sir," said Allan Dare, "he never saw me. Although I was five years on the detective force of Paris, I was never known to any one except the minister and the prefect of police, yet I held daily communication with the members of the force through a man of my own, who never saw me except in a sitting position and thoroughly disguised. I followed *à la mode Le Coque*, as the French would say."

"Ah!" said the chief, "so you are a disciple of that great man. But I hardly think French methods will work in New York. Our thieves are too cunning, and then everything in Paris is made of such gingerbread work that one of our cracksmen would go through it with a penknife."

"Undeceive yourself there, sir," said Allan Dare. "The French locks and bolts are much heavier than any in this country, and yet, so perfect are the thieves in the manufacture of their tools, that, with articles much smaller than those used here, they can do their work in half the time. I will show you a box of instruments used by a first-class French artist—or cracksmen, if you please," and he produced a neat box about six by eighteen inches. "This," said he, "contains thirty implements for the ordinary work of breaking into a bank or store. With these you can open all sorts of locks, and cut through the side of the heaviest iron strong-box."

"Amazement!" said the chief. "You carry all these tools about you, and I suppose know how to use them."

"Of course I do," said the young man. "I can use them as well as any burglar can."

"Ah!" said the chief, "how do I know, Mr. Allan Dare, that you are not one of the gang that have cut up such devilish pranks in New York during the last few months? Why shouldn't I arrest you at once?" and he put his hand toward the bell-rope connecting with the outer office.

The young man drew himself up to his full height, and his eyes flashed fire as he exclaimed, "Take *me* for a burglar, sir!"

"Well, yes; why not, when I find you an adept in the use of tools, and carrying a full supply about with you? You needn't look so fiercely, as if you would like to strangle me, for if you were to move a finger toward me I would settle you at once," and the chief pulled from his drawer a double-barreled pistol, which he held carelessly in his hand.

"God forbid," said Allan Dare, "that I should threaten you or any gentleman of your age and position; but I must confess that I feel indignant at being classed with burglars when I was doing all in my power to enlighten you in regard to the ways of these wretches. But, to show you how little I care for pistols, you are at liberty to fire at any part of my body you please. It will better convince you that I am what I claim to be than anything else. Fire away; you can't affect me in the least."



"Don't tempt me, young man," said the chief. "I generally take people at their word; and if you say 'Fire,' fire I will."

"Fire away; I'm shot-proof." And with that the chief fired his pistol at the speaker; but Allan stood unmoved, and, although the chief half expected the result, he was a little surprised.

"Well," said the old thief-taker, laughing, "you have won my regard. I appreciate your indignation and admire your courage. Now, tell me what kind of armor you wear."

"I wear," said Allan, "a chain-steel armor, made expressly for me in Paris. It is very light, but will turn a musket-ball at ten paces. Although I have been hit by bullets on several occasions, fired at me by highwaymen and burglars, none of them did me any damage."

"Good," said the chief; "I give you my hand, and I can't tell why, but I give you my confidence also. I spoke as I did to see if you would really feel the indignity, and I saw that your indignation was genuine. Now, sit down, and we'll talk matters over. You must tell me all the mysteries of the thieves' profession, in which I find I am not so much of an expert as I imagined. First, I want to know what special talent you possess to make yourself useful. I want a first-class detective, and you must be aware that there are certain qualifications a detective must possess to render him useful. The men I have on the force are mere bunglers, and I begin to fear I'm not much better myself. You seem to possess wonderful strength."

"Yes," said Allan Dare, "I have never met my equal in that regard." As he spoke, he took from his pocket a silver dollar and broke it in two with his fingers.

"That's very well," said the chief; "but I've seen a juggler do the same thing. It only requires practice."

"Can you dispense with this poker?" asked Allan, picking up, from the corner of the fireplace, a bar of iron about three quarters of an inch in diameter.

"Yes," said the chief; "you may swallow it, if you wish. I have seen a juggler do that also."

"No," said Allan Dare, "I am going to do what no juggler can do, unless he is as strong as I am," and, as he spoke, he twisted the poker into a curl, as if it had been a light wire.

"Well again," said the chief; "but I want to know how much you can lift, how many desperate men you can handle, and at what rate of speed you can travel."

"If you had all the necessary articles here," said Allan, "I could soon show you ; but, in the absence of anything on which to exhibit my strength, may I ask you to step on to this small table ?"

The chief, who seemed to be much amused at the performances of his new acquaintance, stepped from a chair to the middle of the table, and, folding his arms, said, "Go ahead, Mr. Juggler, and swallow me !"

Allan Dare grasped the table with one hand and held it at arm's length, with the chief in the center.

"That's better," said the chief ; "but I saw a man, the other day, catch a thirty-two pound cannon-ball fired from a cannon."

"And yet that fellow could not probably hold that cannon-ball at arm's length. Have you a door anywhere about the premises that you could spare for a day or two, until another could be made ?"

"Oh, yes," said the chief. "There is a two-and-a-half-inch oak-door, made to stand a siege. A crazy man ran his head against it the other day and dashed his brains out. So, I warn you, don't try that experiment."

"I intend nothing of that kind," said Allan, putting on a buck-skin glove and walking to the door, where, drawing back his arm, he struck a tremendous blow, splitting the door into a dozen pieces and scattering the fragments over the floor of the next room, where the chief's assistant was quietly dozing, awaiting a summons. This worthy rushed into the chief's room to see what in the world was the matter, and found his superior laughing heartily.

"That will do, Mr. Dare," he said. "I am satisfied that you have strength enough for half a dozen detectives. If I allow you to go on in this way you will soon knock the house down."

"I would like to show you one more proof of my strength," said Allan. "Send in eight of your most powerful men and tell them to capture me, and if I don't capture them all and tie them, you need place no further confidence in me."

"No, thank you," said the chief ; "I have seen enough of your strength to know that you would knock them all down like nine-pins. After you had used up my police-force, I should have to get a new set. I am satisfied that you are the strongest man in New York, if not in Paris or London."

"And now let me remark," said Allan Dare, "that these are not my methods of working. My *forte* is strategy. I never use my personal power except in self-defense. I make others do my work, and I select people to do it well. They never know who directs

them ; and, if they are once negligent, they are never so again, for I make an example of them that they never forget. My chief is the only one who will know my abode. When you want me, you need only make a small cross on the door, and I will come so disguised that no one can recognize me."

"I see," said the chief ; "I shall get the credit of being the most astute chief of police in the world, while recently I have made nothing but blunders."

"The most celebrated police-officers," said Allan Dare, "are those that have employed good detectives. Your system here is all wrong ; but I will assist you to so amend it that in one year New York will be the safest city to live in in the world."

"You speak foreign languages, of course ?" said the chief.

"Yes," said Allan, "I can speak French, Spanish, Italian, and German fluently, and I can write a variety of different hands that the best experts could not detect."

"The first accomplishment," said the chief, "is quite necessary, as we have rather a mixed population in New York. The other is of rather doubtful utility, but I make no objection to it. Now, tell me all about yourself. How did you come to adopt the profession of a detective when there are so many other occupations in which you could reach eminence ? Your personal appearance and address would be a fortune to you in this country."

"Before we go any further," replied Allan Dare, "permit me to call your attention to my letters of recommendation." As he spoke, he laid a packet of papers before the chief, who began examining them one by one.

"Ah, yes," said the chief, after a pause, "the police-commissioner of Paris speaks of you in high terms : calls you a second Le Coque ; the prefect says you are a wonder, and equal to Vidocq ; and the Lord-Mayor of London says you are at the head of your profession. What more do I want than these ? I consider you in my service, provided we can agree as to your salary."

"Let that be a matter for you to decide in the future," said Allan. "For the present I have plenty of means. Let me show you my worth first."

At that moment the assistant put his head through the opening which once boasted a door, and said that a gentleman had come to ask assistance. A murder had been committed in Duane Street.

"There," said the chief to Allan, "is an opening for you. I will give you every assistance in the way of detectives."

"That kind of work wants only one head to begin with," said Dare; "more heads would only muddle matters. Besides, to have any one with me would make me known. I must go and disguise myself, and will return and report progress. I may unravel the whole affair in an hour; perhaps it will take me three or four days; or I may fail altogether. If nothing has been touched since the murder was committed, my work will be easier."

"The house is at No. 46 Duane Street," said the chief, "and I wish you success."

The young man departed on his mission, which was to establish in a measure his fitness for the profession in which he claimed to be an expert.

The chief of police now sat down to examine all the reports of the preceding night. He had passed a most pleasant morning in the company of the young detective, who, he had to admit, was his superior in a profession in which the public thought him well skilled. His mind was filled with pleasing illusions, anticipating the triumph he should feel in case his new ally should turn out all he claimed to be, and should discover the perpetrators of the Duane Street murder within a short time; for the papers of late had many remarks far from complimentary in regard to the police-force, and even suggested the necessity of a change in the office of chief of the force, intimating that a younger and more active man was required. It was even hinted that the robbers that infested the city were in collusion with members of the police-force, thus accounting for the impunity with which the villains carried on their operations.

These newspaper attacks affected the chief very much, and the anxieties and annoyances of the past few months were beginning to tell on him. The arrival of Allan Dare was therefore a godsend to him, and his eye brightened at the thought of how the good citizens of New York would stare when he got his new system, imported from London and Paris, fairly under way. The idea even occurred to him how pleasant it would be if his handsome daughter should take a fancy to Allan Dare, and he be able to call him his son-in-law.

At length he roused himself from his pleasant reveries, muttering, "What an old fool I'm getting to be! No wonder the newspapers think there should be a change in the head of the department. Here am I—who was never known to put faith in any one, who watch my men as if they were all rogues—pinning my faith

on a man I never laid eyes on before to-day, and who, for what I know, may be the greatest scoundrel on earth. I ought to feel ashamed of myself; and no doubt I shall, when this youngster comes back at the end of a week with a long cock-and-bull story, like the rest of them, the whole meaning of which being that he can't unravel the mystery."

While the chief was thus talking to himself, the assistant again made his appearance, saying, "Here's a card from a gentleman on very pressing business."

"Show him in," said the chief. "They all have very pressing business, and seem to think that I never want a moment's rest. Tell him, Dobbs, if he wants anything out of me, he must come straight to the point, for I never talk to any one more than five minutes." The chief was quite oblivious to the fact that he had just given three hours of his valuable time to Allan Dare.

"The Rev. W. G. Raymond," he said, looking at the card that was handed to him. "I wonder what *he* wants. Some canting hypocrite, with a subscription-list begging money to build a church, who, when he fills his pockets, will emigrate to Europe for a while, and then return to organize a new system of swindling the public. I will settle the fellow at once. I hate the whole tribe of beggars."

The entrance of the reverend gentleman put a stop to the chief's reflections. The new-comer was tall and bent with age, and was habited in a clerical suit of black. His hair was gray, and tied up in a long cue, and he wore a pair of violet-colored spectacles. The thick crape on his hat and his black silk gloves indicated that he was in deep mourning. The Rev. Mr. Raymond was altogether an ancient and picturesque-looking gentleman, somewhat shaky about the legs.

The chief eyed him sternly, and pointed to a chair, for he was satisfied that here was another wolf in sheep's clothing, of whom he had seen so many before.

"What is your business, sir? My time is very limited."

The reverend gentleman commenced, in a quavering and squeaky voice, with some remark about the weather, from which interesting subject he passed to the condition of his liver and the wonderful efficacy of Doctor Brick's pills, which had done him a great deal of good, and, under Providence, had been the means of prolonging his valuable life.

He had evidently reached that stage in his mortal career when, had he been a native of the cannibal islands, his friends would have

knocked him on the head and called all hands to feast on his carcass; for, although old and feeble, the dominie's bones were well covered, his good condition showing that he had consumed his full allowance of provisions.

The reverend gentleman consulted a huge silver repeater of the warming-pan pattern, gazing fondly at the relic (which might have been an heirloom) ere he returned it to his pocket.

"Mr. Chief of Police," said the old gentleman, "you will excuse me, but I am proud of this watch. It has been in the Warren family one hundred and twenty-four years. I move by this watch, and I wished to ascertain whether it is time for me to take my lunch. I find that I have just fourteen minutes to talk to you."

"I wish you would bear in mind," said the chief, impatiently, "that I have not had *my* lunch yet, having no great-grandfather's watch to guide me; and I want you distinctly to understand that I never allow any one over five minutes to talk to me on any subject. A man who can't say what he wants in five minutes can't say it at all."

"Dear me!" said the old gentleman, in a querulous tone, "and I've got so much to say about my matters that it will take me two hours at least. I'm a little forgetful occasionally, and I don't remember exactly all I have to say. Let me think a little," and he put his hand to his head in an attitude of deep thought.

"Will five dollars be enough to satisfy you?" asked the chief, still thinking the old clergyman after money to build a church.

The reverend gentleman started from his reverie. "Five dollars, sir!" he said. "Why, five million wouldn't satisfy me! I want justice against the rascal who has led my grandchild astray. Justice, sir, justice is what I want!"

"Then you don't come for money, like most of your cloth?" said the chief.

"Who told you I wanted money?" squeaked the old man, as he rose trembling from his chair. "My grandchild has been decoyed from me, and I want the villain who did it arrested;" and, laying his trembling hands upon the chief's shoulder, said, "Oh, for the love of your daughter, if you have one, restore my darling to me, for my heart is breaking!" and he burst into tears, sobbing like a child.

"But," said the chief of police, "you must first obtain a warrant from a magistrate before I can take any action in your case.

I can only, without a warrant, arrest people in the act of committing some offense."

"And what are all other offenses," exclaimed the old man, in a quavering voice, "compared with the abduction of the child of your heart—an innocent lamb that has been carried away by a ravenous wolf, who, after a few years of enjoyment, will throw her upon the world a degraded, broken-hearted creature? One who started in life with the purity of an angel, will return to me without the semblance of what she was. She will come back to her poor, broken-hearted grandfather; it can not be that she will sink to the lowest depths of degradation—no, it is impossible!" and at the thought he wept again.

The chief, though not given to the sympathetic, was visibly affected by the old man's sorrow, and said, "My dear sir, I will do all I can to help you. Tell me this man's name, and where he is to be found."

"His abode no man knoweth. I think he dwells with the prince of darkness. He is nowhere when wanted, and everywhere when not wanted. He is a wolf in sheep's clothing, a blot upon the earth. He has a fitting name for such a consummate villain. You will find it in the purlieus of vice: yet I once took that man to my heart and thought him all that is good."

"Come," said the chief, "don't excite yourself by these recollections, but tell me the man's name, and let me advise you what to do."

"His name," said the old man, "is Allan Dare, and I hope you will deal with him as he deserves when he is in the hands of the law."

"Allan Dare!" exclaimed the chief, jumping from his seat. "Why, the scoundrel! he has deceived me too. I know him, Mr. Raymond, and I will have him arrested at once," and he started for the door.

"Stop a moment, sir," said the old man. "When you get hold of him confront him with me, and, if the law fails to deal with him as he deserves, I will rend him apart with these feeble hands," and, picking up the poker which Allan Dare had so lately twisted into a corkscrew, he exclaimed, "I will straighten him out as I do this poker." With a sudden effort, the Rev. Mr. Raymond brought back the poker to its normal shape, bursting at the same moment into a laugh that was quite unlike the sounds that generally emanate from the throat of a feeble old man.

"Sold again!" cried the chief. "There is only one man in New York who can do that, and you are the man, Allan Dare. You convince me more and more that I am a mere tyro. But, heavens, what a disguise you are in, and what an actor you are! You would make a fortune on the stage. I shall now prize you more than ever."

"But," said Allan, "only two minutes ago you were ready to hang me."

"That's true. I have shown myself a credulous old fool; and yet I don't regret being deceived in this case, for I have shown you that I am not the cold, hard man people take me for, but have a little of the milk of human kindness left in me."

"Well," said Allan, "this is the disguise in which I did my work in Duane Street, and I came at once from there to you to report progress. The game is all ready to be bagged, and I think we have one of those ingenious robbers who have so long eluded your detectives. It's no wonder your men have been off the scent for so long a time, for they didn't look high enough. Crime generally lurks in the slums of cities, it is true, but it is sometimes found in drawing-rooms also; and this event has given me a hint that I will take care to follow up. I went in my disguise to Duane Street, and represented myself as a relative of the lady who was supposed to have been murdered. She was a Mrs. Ruggles, who occupied a suite of rooms in the house, and had her meals sent in to her from a caterer's. She was fashionable, reputed rich, and had valuable diamonds. I first requested that no one should be notified of the event until I had finished my investigations, and, when I showed my authority, the lady of the house entered into my plans. The room in which Mrs. Ruggles slept looks into Duane Street, with a dressing-room in the rear and a parlor on the right of the bedroom. A wide porch runs along the front of the house, on which open French windows from the parlor and the bedroom. A door in the entry leads out upon this porch. I found all the doors bolted and locked; but there was an upper window-shutter open, so that from the porch I could see everything in the bedroom. A French bedstead was against the wall opposite the window, on which lay a woman, her head apparently hanging outside the bed and with what seemed a deep gash in her throat, the bed being much disordered. There was a night-lamp burning near the bureau, one of the drawers of which was open. I found all the outside fastenings leading to this room apparently secure. I then unlocked the door with my screw-



pincers, but found that it was still held fast by a bolt. I then took a little magnetic instrument and ascertained the position of the bolt, and went to work with a drill to bore for it, but found that somebody had preceded me, and that a hole had already been bored by a similar instrument and the bolt shot with a pry; but the hole had been so carefully filled that it could only be detected by some one familiar with such practices. In digging out the hole which had been bored in the door, I came across this penknife-blade, which had evidently been used to shoot the bolt, but which had broken in the middle. I then shot the bolt and opened the door. It is needless to say that the robber, whoever he was, pursued the same method that I did to get into the room. I found the lady still living, but in a comatose condition. What looked like a gash in her throat was simply a red ribbon which she wore, and with which her lace night-dress was trimmed. On a chair by the bedside was a bottle of laudanum, from Wall & Short, druggists, labeled No. 20,164. The robbers evidently intended to kill the lady, and let the world suppose she had taken too much laudanum, but were frightened off before they had made all their arrangements. All the bureau-drawers were locked and their contents apparently undisturbed.

I had in the mean time sent for the lady's physician. He was under the impression that she had taken an overdose of laudanum, as she was in the habit of using the article; and I let him proceed upon that theory, as he had not evidently the least suspicion that a robbery had been perpetrated. I found that all her valuable diamonds she was in the habit of wearing had disappeared. I cautioned the lady of the house—who is a prudent, sensible woman—to keep an eye over the servants, and not to repeat anything to any one. As to the patient, the doctor says she is all right, although she has had a narrow escape; but it will be a long time before she will be able to explain matters. I found, on the floor near the lady's bed, a small diamond breastpin, such as men wear in their shirt-bosoms. On the back of it are the initials 'K. W.' This is important, if the lady says it's not hers when she is able to answer questions. I then questioned the lady of the house as to the other inmates of her establishment. She said that the only boarders she had besides Mrs. Ruggles were a Mr. Edward Cole, who had been with her two years, and two maiden ladies named Koontz, who had a suite of rooms in the back of the house similar to those occupied by Mrs. Ruggles in front; that Mr. Cole was a nice gentleman of thirty, who had a parlor and bedroom on the third floor;

that he was often absent on business, and was then in Philadelphia. All the boarders had night-keys, and came and went as they pleased. No one sat up for them, but a lamp was kept burning in the hall-way at night.

"I then procured the pass-key to Mr. Cole's room, and examined it carefully. It had not been occupied for some days, the landlady stated, and there was no appearance of the bed having been recently disturbed. The chambermaid said that she had aired the room daily during Mr. Cole's absence, dusted the furniture, mantelpiece, etc., and put fresh water in the pitcher.

"Were these cigar-ashes on the mantel yesterday when you dusted it?" I asked; "and was this burned paper in the fireplace, and were these dirty pair of boots and soiled shirt-collar in the closet?"

"La me! no indeed," said the surprised chambermaid; "none of them things was there yesterday. A clean pair of boots has been took and them ones left in their place. But Mr. Cole don't smoke, an' he never do have any tinder-box in his room; leastways I never seen any; an' that there collar ain't his'n; it's marked "K. W."'

"That will do now," said I. "I dare say all these things were here, but you didn't see them."

"That's all I have to report for the present. I'm sure we have our man, but so far I have no idea where the jewelry is. We must watch every night till we capture Cole, as he lets himself in with a night-key, and we must have that chambermaid shadowed by some one that will live in the house. I'm sure the woman knows more than she will tell."

"Well," said the chief, "you are a trump, and have found out more in an hour than my whole police-force would have done in a week. I believe we are on the track of this new gang of burglars, who are evidently directed by a master-hand. Perhaps this fellow Cole may be the one."

"No," said Allan, "Cole is a mere bungler, for the very steps he took to conceal his operations betrayed him. Had he remained in the house he would not have been suspected, and there would have been no proof against him. He was, no doubt, in the house on the night of the robbery, and perhaps had a confederate with him. He will probably return home to-morrow night, when he can be arrested. The chambermaid may put a letter in the post-office. Put the post-master on his guard, and we can find out

Cole's hiding-place. Don't let the news of the arrest get into the papers. Put off an examination as long as possible ; run the risk of a suit for damages, but don't make the matter public. I have warned the servants at the house to be discreet. They are under the impression that Mrs. Ruggles took too much laudanum. None of them know anything about a robbery. The chambermaid is the only one I suspect. Put on your best men in this case, and I will see whether they do their duty intelligently."

"You are a wonderful man," said the chief, "and will make me famous ; but I hardly think you will deceive me again with your disguises, for whenever I see a big man of your shape anywhere I shall think of you."

"You are mistaken," said Allan Dare, "if you suppose there are no men in New York with my thews and sinews. I know three men who are so near my size that you could not distinguish any difference. At least one of them could, I believe, tie me hand and foot without my being able to prevent it."

"Who can they be ?" said the chief. "I'm sure I don't know them."

"Never mind their names just now ; we shall know more of them anon. But I am beginning to get hungry, not having eaten anything since six o'clock this morning."

"Come with me, then, to Peter Stelle's," said the chief, "for you have certainly earned a good dinner. Peter is the best cook in the city. How he will stare when he sees me in clerical company, for I am not credited by the citizens of New York generally with much piety."

So off they went together, and for the present we will leave them in a pleasant frame of mind discussing their dinner.

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## CHAPTER VI.

### THE VANDEUSEN BALL.

ON the 16th of March, 1820, the fashionable people of New York were excited over a grand ball that was to take place that night at the residence of Amos Vandusen, the millionaire, president of the Manhattan Internal Improvement Company, a joint-

stock affair that had lately sprung into existence. Mr. Vandeuſen was one of the leading citizens of New York at that period, foremoſt in every enterpriſe calculated to benefit the city, and was much reſpected by everybody.

Crime had of late ſo increaſed in New York, particularly in thoſe portions that were badly lighted, that the citizens were ſeriouſly conſidering whether it would not be well to follow the example of London and Paris and light the ſtreets with gas. Among the leading advocates of this ſcheme was Mr. Vandeuſen. The great expenſe attending its introduction was the chief objection, although many old-faſhioned people were frightened at the very idea of gas, contending that fire would run through the pipes and ſet fire to any building where the new-fangled illuminator was introduced—that thoſe who were not burned up would be aſphyxiated by the noxious fumes, and that the introduction of gas would be a death-blow to the tallow-chandlers and to the whale-fiſhery. Numerous other arguments equally rational were advanced by the opponents of the plan.

The poor people ſaid that gas was well enough for the rich, who turn night into day, but what advantage could it be to the working-man, who toils all day, and after ſupper is glad to go to bed by the light of a tallow-candle and ſleep until daylight calls him up to renew his labors?

So the excitement raged; and Mr. Vandeuſen, who had been ſo liberal in his charities as to have obtained the reputation of a public benefactor, bade fair to loſe all his popularity in his attempts to carry out the new project. Such is too often the fate of a popular idol. His followers are always ready to pull him down from his pedeaſtal if he dares to run counter to their prejudices.

But Mr. Vandeuſen was a philoſopher who underſtood the value of popular applauſe, and followed his convictions regardless of public clamor. He kept on in his pet ſcheme of lighting the ſtreets of New York, certain that it would greatly benefit the city and add to his own private fortune.

Mr. Vandeuſen had amaſſed ſo large a fortune that, for what anybody knew, he might be worth five or ſix millions of dollars—an almoſt unheard-of ſum in thoſe days. He was a gentleman of the old ſchool. In fine weather he uſually appeared in a blue coat with braſs buttons, a white waiaſtcoat, and light trousers, with white-topped boots. His hair was well powdered, and worn with a long cue; and, as he leaned upon his gold-headed cane with both hands

when riding down Broadway in his open barouche, he was recognized by thousands as a gentleman and philanthropist.

Mr. Vandeusen had a lovely wife and an only daughter, and, while he loved and venerated the former, the latter was the idol of his heart. He owned a handsome residence near the Bowling Green; but, as the city was moving northward rapidly, he determined to build a house in that direction that should eclipse anything that had yet been seen in New York.

In accordance with this idea, he had consulted the best architects, and the result was a beautiful marble edifice, seventy feet front and one hundred feet deep, in the center of a fine square of an acre or more, embellished by the best landscape gardener that could be found.

The house was furnished in French style, most of the movables being imported from Paris. All the appliances of the house would have done credit to a palace. Huge crystal chandeliers were pendant from the ceilings; the marble steps which led to the front door were flanked by gigantic lamps—in fact, all the arrangements were superior to anything ever seen before in New York.

Thousands of people came to admire this magnificent residence, which, although grand, had nothing pretentious about it; and here it was that Mr. and Mrs. Vandeusen proposed to give a ball or house-warming on the night of the 16th of March.

Many months had been spent by the family in furnishing the house as the various articles arrived from Europe in the packets. All the best upholsterers in the city had been employed, and men were busy in putting down carpets, hanging curtains and draperies, unpacking china, etc.

Mr. Vandeusen invited all who had participated in furnishing and ornamenting his house to a handsome breakfast in the great dining-room. Said the mechanics, "If he feasts *us* this way, what will he do when he gives the nobs a tuckout!"

The stables attached to this magnificent mansion were in no way inferior to the other accompaniments. Adjacent to the house were several unoccupied lots owned by the millionaire, on one of which he proposed to erect a house for his beloved daughter Eugenia when she married, an event that he hoped she would postpone for some time. Having married from love himself, he intended that his daughter should marry the man of her choice, even if poor, provided he was a gentleman and a man of honor.

Around these unoccupied lots a high and close board fence had been erected, effectually concealing the inclosed area.

The public could not conjecture the meaning of this inclosure, into which bricks, mortar, and sheets of iron had been constantly carried, and where workmen of different trades entered at all hours of the day.

No one could tell what all the hammering and clattering were about, for the workmen were paid for keeping silence on the subject; and, when they at last finished their labors, the inclosure was locked, the watchman on guard driving away all intruders.

Many were the speculations indulged in by the crowd that daily assembled near the inclosure as to the object of all this hammering. Some said it was a private circus for the benefit of the poor, for Mr. Vandeußen was famous for his liberality in giving circus-tickets to poor children, and in other ways contributing to their happiness, including in his benevolence even the poor outcasts of the streets. His heart was as large as his house, and he never inquired into the character of any small pattern of humanity that applied for a ticket.

Of course, everybody "in society" was anxious to go to the ball, and Smith, the popular sexton of St. Vitus's Church, who had charge of all the details, was importuned from morning till night—but Smith had received strict orders from his patron to allow no one except those on the invitation-list to enter his house on the night of the ball, and Smith well knew that it was for his interest to see that these orders were strictly obeyed.

On the eventful night a line of carriages commenced arriving at Mr. Vandeußen's door by eight o'clock, for people in those days kept more sensible hours than they do at present, and after a ball went home and retired to bed in time to get some sleep, and eat their breakfast next morning at a reasonable hour.

Our forefathers were a hardier race than we are, owing to our late and irregular hours. We may try to recover the strength we have frittered away at balls and operas by using dumb-bells and Indian clubs, or by making believe row an imaginary boat—which is, perhaps, the silliest thing of them all; but of all the exercises, practiced by old and young to build up a shattered constitution or develop latent strength, nothing can compare with the habit of keeping early hours, and breathing the pure air to be found in an early country walk.

As the carriages drove up to the door of the mansion, all were

astonished at the brilliant illumination. The sidewalk-lamps and those on the marble steps made the surroundings almost as light as day, and the house, from garret to cellar, was so brilliant that the first thought of everybody was that it was on fire!

This was the proudest moment of Mr. Vandeusens's life. He had here exemplified the beautiful effects of gas, and the simplicity and safety of using it. The high fence on the unoccupied lots inclosed his gas-retort, where he could make gas enough to supply a hundred and ninety burners, equal to at least two thousand wax candles, and at much less expense.

As the guests entered the brilliantly lighted rooms, it was some time before they could become accustomed to the glare. "Charming!" "Heavenly!" "Gorgeous!" "Splendid!" were the words heard on every side as the ladies tripped up the grand staircase, which was bordered with choicest roses and other flowers.

Nothing has ever appeared, even in these days of luxury, superior to the up-stairs reception-rooms of Mr. and Mrs. Vandeusens. As the ladies put off their wrappings, each received from an attendant a bouquet of the choicest flowers; and as the gentlemen left their dressing-rooms to escort the ladies down-stairs, they were each presented with three choice rose-buds, which they pinned to the lappels of their coats. The hostess had thus arranged her drawing-rooms to represent a floating parterre, since every individual was more or less bedecked with flowers.

The ceilings were literally covered with flowers, and the pictures on the walls might be seen peeping from alcoves of roses. In the front room were several landscapes of great merit by Gainsborough, Wilson, and Morland; one or two Claudes were there also, and some gems by Gaspar Poussin. These were in beautifully carved oak and gilt frames.

In the middle room were pictures by Ostade, Teniers, and Huysman, and in the third room were animal pictures from the easels of Stubbs and Gilpin.

The rooms on the opposite side of the house were equally devoted to art. In the front room were classic compositions of the French school of David and his followers. In the library were portraits of the host and hostess by Lawrence, and original portraits of celebrated persons by Reynolds, Stewart, Cosway, and Romney; while the great dining-room was hung with choice proof-engravings by Audran, Edilinck, Woollett, Strange, Sharp, Bartalozzi, Vivares, Chatelain, and many others.

Any one at all conversant with art could not but feel that, in the selection of his pictures, Mr. Vandeuſen had exhibited rare taſte. In the different rooms were alſo ſome beautiful works in marble, copies of the antique moſtly, with a few originals by Flaxman, David d'Angers, and Canova. The library contained ſome ten thouſand volumes of rare books, in magnificent bindings by Roger Payne, Hayday, and other celebrated binders.

The furniture and upholstery correſponded with the other adornments, and was rich beyond deſcription, without any tendency to gaudineſs. Everything was in keeping.

Mr. Vandeuſen's face was wreathed in ſmiles as he mingled with his gueſts, having a word to ſay to every one. His wife and daughter were receiving their viſitors in the large reception-parlor, and they too looked happy at the ſucceſs of Mr. Vandeuſen's ſcheme of illumination, which was a ſucceſs beyond their fondeſt hopes.

Everybody of prominence in the city was at the ball. Even our old friend, the chief of police, who could ſeldom be induced to join in ſuch feſtivities, was preſent with his wife and handsome daughter, who was eſcorted by a tall, fine-looking man of thirty, whom the chief introduced as Mr. Edgar Wilde. This group, like the others, was ſoon loſt in the crowd, expreſſing, like the reſt, their wonder and delight at the enchantment with which they were ſurrounded.

There were representatives preſent of all the old families, deſcendants of the Dutch ſettlers of New York. The Stuyveſants were in the aſcendancy as regards numbers, though hardly in the way of dreſs, which in their caſe retained a good deal of the old-fashioned ſimplicity. Still, on account of their deſcent from the illuſtrious Peter, they were regarded with awe and veneration as the foundation-ſtone of New York ariſtocracy. The Livingſtons aſſumed to be, if anything, of purer blood than anybody elſe, had greater wealth, and muſtered ſo ſtrongly in numbers that half the people ſeemed to be named Livingſton.

The Van Winkles were there in full force. Theſe were deſcendants of that doughty hero, immortalized by Irving, who took ſuch a long nap in the Catskill Mountains. Though ſomewhat ſhiftleſs, like their illuſtrious ancestor Rip, they were accounted the "*crème de la crème*." Now, alas! the family has died out. The introduction of gas, ſteam, and other new-fangled notions was too much for their conſervative ſouls, and they periſhed rapidly.

There figured alſo at the ball a whole tribe of Vedders, deſcend-



ants of the patriarch Nicolas Vedder, who was landlord of the "Golden Schnapps" in colonial days, but who lived to see a republic established and his native village flourish, with much custom coming to his door. The Vedders were a haughty race. They went to the Vandeusen ball, and considered they paid the plebeian host a great compliment in entering his house.

It was noticed, however, that many of the Vedder young ladies were wall-flowers that evening, and that the young men didn't know how to dance.

The Vandutchers were so numerous at the ball that they formed a quadrille all to themselves. Their antique costumes attracted much attention, and the *nouveau riches* part of society suggested that these were the dresses worn by the Vandutchers in the days of the great Peter Stuyvesant, and that the family had no other.

The Vanderdonks, who had not been on good terms with the Vandutchers, agreed for this night to bury the hatchet and unite to put down the *parvenues* that had come to the surface within the last twenty-five years. We regret to say that this ancient family were little noticed during the evening, and that the wall-paper in their vicinity was somewhat rubbed by their leaning against it. The Vanderdonks solemnly declared they would go to no more plebeian assemblies.

It was in reference to these patricians that one young lady remarked, "If you call that aristocracy, I want to remain in the lower ranks."

Among the visitors announced were Mr. and Mrs. Charles Morton and their daughter, who here made her *début* in society. As these people will occupy a prominent place in our story, we will introduce them to the reader.

Mr. Morton was at that time the leading banker of the city. He was a fine-looking man, with iron-gray hair and a slight stoop in his shoulders; his age being about fifty-five years. His wife, an elegant woman, looked as if she might be his elder daughter, so lightly had time passed over her. Her eyes were as bright as they might have been in youth, and her beautiful chestnut hair was without a trace of gray.

Mrs. Morton had a smile for every one as she pressed gracefully through the throng, her magnificent diamonds glittering in the light.

Her daughter Louise, who accompanied her, had just come from Madame Faucet's finishing-school, and, as we have mentioned, this

was her first entrance into society, in which she was to take her position for good or evil, according as she might follow the path marked out for her, or pursue her own inclination, indifferent to the opinions of the world.

It would be difficult to describe the impression Louise Morton made on society on the night of the Vandeußen ball. "How beautiful she is!" "What a figure!" "What eyes!" were the involuntary exclamations as she passed through the throng to the ball-room, her proud eyes flashing as she heard with undisguised pleasure the encomiums passed upon her.

Behind her came the beautiful Mrs. Eton, *née* Fanny Strong, who had been married about six months to a rich merchant, who, although but forty-two years of age, looked like an old man.

It was the old story in this case—*dazzled by wealth*; for she had never known anything but simple competence. Fanny Strong had given her hand to Mr. Eton with the full knowledge, on his part, that her heart was given to Arthur Seabury, and that she could never love another.

Yet her face was smiling as she moved along by her husband's side, for was she not the cynosure of all eyes, and did she not eclipse Mrs. Morton, the great banker's wife, in her diamonds, and was not her dress imported from Paris, the handiwork of Madame Damaisé, who had made the coronation robes of the Empress Josephine?

Mrs. Eton's taste was perfect, and people marveled greatly how one brought up in what might be called a humble sphere of life could have acquired such polish of manners and such adaptation to the rules of fashionable life. But this lady was an apt scholar, and nothing gave her husband greater pleasure than to see her lovely form decked in diamonds and laces, luxuries that his purse could well afford.

It was but two days before the evening of the ball that he had presented her the necklace she wore, which he had purchased at a cost of forty-five thousand dollars. She had but to smile upon him, and he would have poured the value of one of his India ships into her lap.

Mrs. Eton had, before her marriage, returned to her lover all the souvenirs he had sent her, together with a kind letter, in which she told him that she was unworthy of so high and noble a character as his, and was unfit to struggle with poverty, which would have been her fate if she had married him. She advised Arthur

to seek out and marry some rich girl, and bury his love in the luxuries to be enjoyed from the wealth of a rich wife, for, "Oh, Arthur!" she wrote, "you do not know the happiness to be enjoyed from wealth by those who have known nothing but privations all their lives."

Then she advised him not to attempt to renew their intimacy, for that, now she was to marry a rich man, their ways of life would be apart; and then she added, "I would not give Mr. Eton any cause of complaint for the world. I can not love him, but he is a dear, good old man, and has presented me a diamond engagement-ring worth six hundred dollars, and has settled six thousand a year 'pin money' on me. Now, Arthur, if I married you, we should be obliged to live in a cheap boarding-house, and I should spoil my hands in sewing on buttons;" then she wished him a kind good-by and "all sorts of happiness in this world and the world to come."

When the youth read this letter, he fairly foamed at the mouth with rage, for what is more humiliating to a man who has given a woman his love, and believes himself loved in return, than to receive a letter such as we have quoted, as if every moment of his future would not be embittered by a knowledge of her falsehood.

So far Mrs. Eton had given her husband unalloyed happiness, for, although he was so much older than she, he had not dreamed that her love for Arthur was more than a passing fancy, or that she now thought of any one but himself.

If he had watched her anxious eyes as they passed through the throng in approaching the ball-room, he might have wondered who it was she was expecting to meet. Her bright eyes, which generally looked so full of light and happiness, were now dimmed, and she was silent as she threaded the throng, which was lost in admiration of her charms.

Suddenly her cheek flushed and her heart leaped as a gentleman advanced and politely saluted her and Mr. Eton, and, after a few commonplace remarks, asked the honor of her hand for the quadrille.

"May I, darling?" she said, addressing her husband, who, won by the endearing epithet, said, as she took the gentleman's proffered arm, "Certainly, my dear; go and enjoy yourself."

"Look here, Deville," said Mr. Eton, "I put my wife in your charge while I go to the billiard-room. You know I don't dance, and it is very warm here with all these gas-lights. *Au revoir*,

*petite.*" Mrs. Eton kissed the tip of her glove to him, while her left hand pressed slightly her partner's arm.

"What a time I have had catching sight of you!" she said to Mr. Deville as they sauntered off, not to dance, as the husband supposed, but to reach the conservatory at the farther end of the ball-room, where aromatic odors and subdued lights were inviting those addicted to "firting" to enter.

"And you really looked for me?" he said. "Why, I thought it ages while I was waiting for you to come, and I was afraid some one would claim you for the dance before I could find you."

"Oh," said she, "I have so much to say to you! Do you know that Mr. Eton is perfectly in love with you? He says that you are the rising man of New York, and would not wonder to see you the great millionaire of the city before ten years pass over your head."

"I am extremely gratified," replied her companion, "at Mr. Eton's approbation, and hope his beautiful wife will always hold me in as high esteem as her husband does."

Mr. James Deville was a banker who had arrived from Europe only some eighteen months previous to the date of the ball, and established himself in a handsome building on Broadway, which he had fitted up in a style then very unusual with places of business. He had constructed the most elaborate brick-and-iron treasure-vaults in the city, locked and bolted in such a way that it was thought they would defy the assaults of the most experienced burglars—a most important consideration at a time when burglaries were frequent and successful.

Mr. Deville was a man of the best credit "on 'change," and would discount a note at a fraction less than any other banker, which fact made him popular and brought him a great deal of business. He speculated too, and was almost always successful—a fact which reassured those who might otherwise have mistrusted him.

Deville was considered one of the handsomest men in New York. He was over six feet in height, and, if the gods had wished to design a person to embody all that was manly and powerful, they could not have succeeded better than in this instance. He excelled in all manly exercises; was the best boxer and the most expert pistol-shot in New York.

In form he was a Hercules, and in beauty of feature he might have been classed with Antinous. Indeed, the latter was the sobriquet bestowed on him by the fair sex, with whom he was a gen-

eral favorite, and many a lovely woman lavished her smiles upon him, but to which he was often indifferent.

While Deville was adored by the women, he was a favorite with the men, who felt no envy at his expertness. He so far exceeded others that he had no rivals, and stood alone the Admirable Crichton of his set.

Although the women smiled upon him, the husbands were not jealous, for he always kept his attentions within the bounds of propriety; and, as he paid no more attention to any one of the reigning belles than he did to another, it was surmised that he had some secret attachment in Europe to which he was constant.

He was a welcome guest at every entertainment, and was the life of a party. But at times a fit of despondency would come over him, when he would fall into a reverie amid the gayest scenes, seeming to forget that any one was near him.

No one knew whence Mr. Deville had come. They only knew that he had arrived in a packet from Liverpool, with plenty of means to establish himself in business.

As he presented no letters of introduction, the careful merchants for a time looked askance; but, by the force of his character and his apparent integrity, he succeeded in overcoming their prejudices. No one doubted that he was a gentleman by birth, for his manners were polished and his address was most agreeable.

His features were so handsome that painters begged him to sit for his likeness; but, although, as it might be supposed, he was not without vanity, Deville always refused to gratify them, on the ground that he had not time to spare.

Every lady of his acquaintance would have been glad to secure a copy of his picture to hang up in her boudoir; and yet, although he knew this, the promptings of his vanity were not strong enough to induce him to sit for his portrait.

He had a remarkable pair of dark-blue eyes, forming a striking contrast to his chestnut hair, which clustered in curls around his forehead.

Mr. Deville occupied a handsome suite of rooms in Park Place, and sported an English dog-cart, with a high-mettled bay horse, and a little "tiger" in top boots.

Every morning the dog-cart appeared at Deville's lodgings, and at nine precisely he entered his office, where all his clerks were expected to be at work.

Although no one knew who Mr. James Deville was, there was

nothing mysterious in his movements. Everything he did was open as the day. All his transactions were fair, and, when he had beaten an adversary in some speculation, he would reconcile matters if there was any grumbling, even if at his own loss.

No man could be otherwise than popular under such circumstances.

Mr. Deville and Mrs. Eton entered the conservatory, through which they passed arm in arm amid rows of exotics, until they paused opposite a fountain ornamented with a marble figure of Niobe. The water flowed in torrents over the sad face and draped figure into the basin where tiny gold-fish were swimming.

A subdued light from a gas-jet with a pink globe was cast over the scene, while farther on could be seen other fountains, with fauns and naiads equally beautiful and tempting to those who loved such delicious retreats.

The music from the ball-room came faintly on the air of the conservatory. It was a place a young man and a young woman should have avoided, unless they were of a philosophical temperament, or prepared to converse on scientific or literary subjects.

The two people that stopped at the fountain of Niobe were for a few moments seemingly lost in their own thoughts.

"Shall we sit here, Mr. Deville?" at length said the lady. "It is so beautiful, and this quiet murmur of the water makes one feel a distaste for the noise and confusion of the ball-room. I don't want to leave this enchanting spot. You will find Niobe, too, such good company in case I should prove stupid. Let us rest here."

"I will sit where you please," said Deville; "any place where you may be is enchanting."

"Fie, you naughty man; you know you didn't mean that. It's your set phrase for every woman in love with that handsome face of yours. But you must not talk nonsense like that to me, for you know I don't believe it; and then what would Mr. Eton say if he knew what you have said to me?"

"Why, my dear lady," replied Deville, "he would no doubt agree with me, for I am sure he thinks so every hour of the day. I would not hesitate to tell him to his face that you are the most enchanting and lovely woman in the world. He would be delighted at the compliment paid his good taste in selecting you for his wife."

"Ah, yes," she said, "but I don't want you to say that to any one but me. To say it to him would look as if it were only one of

those pleasantries that you men of the world are constantly uttering without meaning anything. But these things are sacred with me, and I am simple enough to think that they are all meant."

"Simple indeed!" thought Deville to himself. "I wonder whither she is going to lead me."

"My good lady," he continued, "while I hold you in the highest esteem and think you the loveliest of your sex, yet I would never utter a word in that innocent ear that you might not repeat to your husband; in fact, I would be willing to repeat it to him myself."

"But I don't want you to repeat it to any one," said Mrs. Eton, "for then your words would no longer have any charm; and, besides, what does my husband know about the poetry of life? He has no real sentiment, and, although he loves me after a fashion, he looks upon me as a pretty bauble that he has bought to adorn his mansion—a woman who will give him *éclat* in society and who will make his house agreeable to his friends. He loves to have it said that he has the prettiest wife, the best furnished house, the finest horses, and gives the best dinners in town—and that's all he cares for. He gives me a box at the opera, because he knows that all the *lorgnettes* in the house will be leveled at that box; and he likes the best men in the city to be seen there, because it adds to his importance. But he always stays at his club until a few moments before the opera is over, and then he comes to escort me home, where we sit and gape at each other until it is time to go to bed. Mr. Eton is past the sentimental age; and do you not think, after sacrificing myself to him when I might have married a younger and handsomer man, that I am entitled to be complimented by those I appreciate without Mr. Eton's being told of it? I know that I am the handsomest woman in these rooms; my glass tells me so; and I know that my diamonds cost twice as much as Mrs. Morton's."

Devilte could hardly help smiling at this womanly conceit as he replied, "Yet you are as careless of your diamonds as if they were but a trifle. They must have cost at least ten thousand dollars."

"Ten thousand dollars!" exclaimed Mrs. Eton. "Why, Mr. Deville, you don't think I would wear a necklace worth only that sum while Mrs. Morton wears a set worth thirty thousand dollars, and Mrs. Livingston wears a *parure* worth twenty-five thousand, and several other ladies of my acquaintance have sets worth fifteen thousand? No, sir, Mr. Eton would not permit that. Why, the set

I have on my neck cost forty-five thousand dollars at Bullion & Co.'s, and my ear-rings and the diamonds in my hair are worth ten thousand dollars more."

"Lovely neck and sweet head!" said Deville; "worthy of all the diamonds that can be put on them."

"Ah, flatterer!" exclaimed the lady, playfully tapping him with her fan.

"But," said Deville, "are you not afraid of losing the wealth you carry about with you? Suppose your clasp should give way while dancing, and your diamonds should be trampled under foot! You might never recover one half of them."

"Well, Eton would give me more," she replied; "and it would make a startling paragraph in to-morrow's papers, and that would compensate him for the loss."

Devil shook his head. "Oh, no, my sweet friend, Eton would do no such thing. When a man buys his wife a set of diamonds it is a good investment, provided the diamonds are of the first water, for they constantly increase in value. They are generally kept in bank; where they are perfectly safe. Once or twice a year they are worn at a gathering such as this, the husbands taking good care to have detectives around dressed like gentlemen; and about the only risk is through the carelessness of the wearer. If you were to lose your diamonds, Mr. Eton would be so much out of pocket, and it would take all the profits on one or two cargoes to make up the deficiency."

"I wouldn't care if he lost the profits on half a dozen cargoes," said Mrs. Eton; "and it is just so much time thrown away talking all this about a lot of diamonds. I appreciate them less than ever since you tell me they are a safe investment of Mr. Eton's money, for I suppose if he got into a pecuniary difficulty he would not hesitate to sell them."

"Of course," said Deville; "they are always the representatives of fifty-five thousand dollars."

"Then," she said, "they are nothing more than a badge of slavery, into which I have sold myself, and they don't belong to me after all. Did you ever read *Æsop's Fables*?"

"No, my dear friend," replied Deville, "but I will do so if it will please you."

"You dear, sweet fellow," she said, "you are so good! But I must tell you the fable: A mastiff met a hungry wolf, and stopped to have a chat. In the course of conversation the wolf complained



of the difficulty of getting along in this cold world, where victuals are scarce and good society hard to get into. Upon this the dog expatiated on the blessings he enjoyed, being fed on the fat of the land and sleeping in a dry, warm kennel. 'Come live with me, friend wolf, and see how you like it.' The wolf agreed to the proposition; but, as they jogged along, engaged in pleasant conversation, the wolf spied a place on his companion's neck where the hair was all chafed off. 'What causes that mark on your neck, my friend?' inquired the wolf. 'It's nothing,' replied the other, 'but the mark of a collar which I have to wear when they chain me up in the day-time; but it doesn't inconvenience me at all.' 'Oh, ho!' said the wolf. 'Well, I want none of your collars; freedom and a bone now and then are better than slavery with a panful of meat every day. Mr. Mastiff, I wish you joy of your collar, and bid you good-day!' Now, Mr. Deville," she continued, "this diamond necklace is my badge of servitude, and, since I know it is merely a good speculation of Mr. Eton's, it bears right into my flesh, and I feel like trampling it under my feet. There, don't let us talk any more of this hateful necklace. Tell me some of those pretty things you repeated to me in my boudoir the other day. Just say:

"When amidst the gay I meet  
That beaming smile of thine."

Devil laughed. "All that you have said may be true," he replied, "and I pity the man who holds so fragrant a flower in his hand and is not able to enjoy it; but I should fail in my duty to Mr. Eton if I did not assure myself that your necklace is securely fastened. Let me see to that, and I will say as many pretty things to you as you desire."

"I have no objection to that," she said, turning her swan-like neck toward Deville, who proceeded to examine the clasp. As his hands touched her cheek she nestled her pretty face caressingly against them, and her color, coming with the momentary excitement, made her look more beautiful than ever.

"There," he said, leaning over her, his lips almost touching her cheek, "I knew you would lose them. The guard-chain was unhooked and the clasp only half fastened;" and she heard a little "click," as if the clasp had closed with a snap. She looked up to his face, her eyes beaming with kindness and her trembling lips unable to speak her thanks. He knew, then, that he might dare to do as he pleased, but he only kissed her gently on the forehead

and rose to his feet. She clasped his hand and covered it with kisses.

"There, *ma petite*," he said, "your necklace is safe, and it will be your own fault if you lose it and incur your husband's anger. And now that you have been such a good child, I will finish the verses you commenced," and he repeated :

"Though still on me it shines so sweet,  
I scarce can call it mine."

"Yes, but you can," she exclaimed, blushing ; "all my smiles are for you and for no one else. Always call me *ma petite*; it sounds so caressing."

Déville made no answer, but only said, "The music has ceased, and the people are coming this way from the ball-room. We must not be seen here by ourselves, lest it occasion comment. Let us go out through the conservatory exit that leads to the ball-room. We must dance together the next polka, and not let people say we have been flirting all the evening in the conservatory."

"What care I what they say," she replied, "as long as I can be with you. There is not a woman here to-night who would not be happy to be in my place—and life is so short ! Remember I have to return to my collar and chain in a few hours."

Déville pressed her beautiful hand while she lingered over the fountains and statuary, and plucked rose-leaves from the bushes. Then she lingered over a lily, although she had passed twenty of them before, till finally the throng from the ball-room appeared close behind them, and Déville hurried her away so as not to be observed.

"You will come to the conservatory again before you leave the house, will you not ?" she said. "This has been the happiest hour of my existence ; and then you will repeat to me the rest of those beautiful verses ?"

"Yes," replied Déville ; "but let me first look after my friend. Let me carry him a message from you, and that will make him supremely happy."

Mrs. Eton assented, and seated herself in a far corner of the ball-room, where no one would be likely to find her and ask her to dance during Déville's absence.

Meanwhile, Déville wended his way to the billiard-room, expect-

ing to find Mr. Eton ; but the latter had gone up-stairs. He found him playing a rubber of whist with three other old gentlemen, and very intent upon his game. He had ostentatiously placed four ten-dollar gold pieces on the table as markers. Mr. Eton, even in the smallest matters, liked to display his money.

At the conclusion of a hand, Deville approached Mr. Eton and said, "Mrs. Eton is worried about you, and is afraid you are not enjoying yourself. She declares she will go home if you are tired, although she is engaged for six dances, and is enjoying herself very much."

"The darling!" exclaimed Mr. Eton. "How thoughtful she always is of me! No, Deville, tell her I am as happy as I can be away from her ; but she can't dance and I play cards and yet be together. Do me the favor to look out for her comfort, and hand her in to supper when it is ready, for I may be in the middle of a game. You know, Deville, exactly what to do. There, that's a good fellow, oblige me."

"Certainly," said Deville. "But I shall come up and let you know when supper is ready, for I am sure Mrs. Eton would not enjoy it without you."

"No," said Eton, "the dear girl, I don't believe she would, she is so thoughtful of me ; but you try ~~to~~ make her contented, Deville. I will join you if I can, but I am playing ten dollars a corner." With that he led the ace of hearts, which he followed with king and queen, leaving the best of the suit in his hand, which was as good as a trump ; and Deville went away with his message.

Those three tricks made Mr. Eton very happy, for they secured him the game and twenty dollars. His heart expanded as his profits increased—as it did in commerce. When he netted fifty thousand on a cargo, he always gave his wife some handsome diamonds. He bought no other kind of jewelry, for it might depreciate in value.

"What a loving wife that is of mine!" said he, addressing his companions. "So thoughtful as she is of me! I don't believe she will enjoy herself this evening without me. She is always willing to give up her own pleasures for mine. Do you know, it was as much as I could do to persuade her to come to-night, she is so fond of home—I lead trumps, Mr. Thompson, to draw you out," and then he went on: "She makes my home so pleasant, and keeps the house full of nice young fellows that are devoted to her,

but she doesn't care a snap for any of them—I trump your ace, Mr. Phillips,” and the three other old fellows raised their eyes over their glasses with a peculiar look which each understood.

“You are a lucky dog, Eton,” said they. They had heard from their wives of Mrs. Eton's *penchant* for Deville, and were much amused with Eton's complacency, who played on, happy in his soul, and piled up the ten-dollar corner-bets, while Deville was whispering poetry in his wife's ear in the conservatory.

For appearance' sake she danced several times with others, but always found her way back to Deville, as if by accident, at the end of the quadrille.

During one of the dances, while Mrs. Eton was away from Deville, he noticed a couple enter the ball-room. He thought he had never seen a handsomer pair, and he envied the man who was with the beautiful girl. It was the daughter of the rich banker, Mr. Morton. We have already said that she was beautiful, but this expression hardly conveys an idea of her loveliness. She was just entering her nineteenth year, with the air and grace of a woman that had been at least two years in society. She was tall, with a lithe and willowy shape, and her beautiful arms were as round and white as if sculptured in marble. Her hands were small and perfect in shape, and her tiny foot, as it peeped from under her dress, was a marvel. Her eyes might have been taken for those beautiful black diamonds of which we have heard but never seen. Her dark hair fell in luxuriant curls behind her ear, while it was rolled up in a coil back of her Grecian head, making her look like one of the goddesses of Mount Olympus. Her face—but that can not be described! Its beauty would startle any one on first beholding it. Every feature was perfect, and in her cheek were dimples such as are sometimes seen in young and lovely children.

Yet withal there was an imperiousness in her air and a haughty look in her eye that were not altogether agreeable to encounter. The glance of her eye was at times like the lightning's flash, and made one start; but then it would melt into a soft, languid look that would win over the most obdurate heart.

There stood Louise Morton in her indescribable beauty, and one of the handsomest men in the room was about to lead her out in the dance.

This person did not look to be over nineteen years of age, although he was actually twenty-four. He was of medium height, finely formed, and of a light elastic figure. He had the hand-

somest blue eyes in the world, and the face of a beautiful girl. The women called him "the angel."

He was very animated in his conversation, exerting all his faculties to entertain his partner, while his soft blue eyes seemed to devour her with their looks of admiration.

Meanwhile, the young lady did not seem particularly interested in her partner's conversation, for her eyes wandered about the room, resting first on the beautiful Mrs. Eton, who, excited by the dancing, looked her prettiest. Then she looked at Deville, who was regarding her with undisguised admiration, and wondering who she could be.

When Miss Morton's eye caught that wondering look of Deville's, she started with a look of delight, as if she had longed to see him. But she had never laid eyes on him before to-night, and she wondered to herself who he could be, and whether there were many men in New York as handsome.

No matter in what part of the room she moved, she found herself looking at Deville; and every time she did so she found his piercing eyes fixed upon her. He seemed to be looking at some beautiful picture, whose eyes, by the skill of the artist, would follow one whithersoever he moved.

Deville had evidently forgotten all about Mrs. Eton, for whom he had been waiting while she danced, and Louise Morton had evidently forgotten all about her partner, from the attention she bestowed upon Deville—not with the determination of making overtures to him, but because she could not help it.

There was a fascination in the man that bound her as if by a spell, and the same electric current that affected one seemed to affect the other, so that they continued to look into each other's eyes until George May, her partner, noticed it, and remarked, "That man seems to annoy you with his staring, and, if he continues it, I shall feel called upon to ask him what he means."

"Sir," said the lady, haughtily, "what man are you speaking of? If you refer to the handsome gentleman looking this way, he seems to be one that would know how to resent an interference. Probably he is only admiring your handsome face, and you could not object to that."

"But it is not polite to stare at any one as he does at you."

"As long as I don't object to it," she replied, "I don't see why you should take exception. Besides, my father is near by, and if I desire any assistance I can call on him." This was said in the

most chilling manner, and Mr. May could, of course, say no more. He put on rather a subdued air, but, like his partner, kept his eyes upon what he considered the impertinent stranger.

This electrical interchange of glances between Louise Morton and Deville continued while the dance lasted. But presently Mrs. Eton stopped in front of Deville, and held out her hand, saying, "Come, take a turn with me." This request, of course, he could not decline. But, turn where Deville would, he could not keep his eyes off Miss Morton, and, look at her when he would, he found those diamond-like eyes fixed upon him.

When Deville led his partner to her seat, she said, "Oh, I am so glad to get back to you. It was such a bore to dance with that man; and I tried all the time to catch your eye, but you seemed to be looking at something afar off. Your lips were half open, as if lost in admiration of some beautiful object."

"Yes?" he said, and that was all that passed between them. He was not in a complimentary mood, and, notwithstanding all the fascinating attentions she paid him, the efforts she made to lead him into conversation failed to do so. His eyes wandered round the room in search of the sweet vision that had entranced him. But Miss Morton had finished her dance, and had taken her father's arm to join her mother in the reception-room.

The doors of the grand supper-room now flew open, the music struck up a march, and the guests thronged in to the table, which was spread with all the delicacies of the season.

The pyramids of flowers on the table and the beds of roses on the mantels and window-sills were so numerous and so gorgeous, that one felt as if he were sailing in a sea of flowers. The throng was perhaps rather too dense for comfort; but that is always expected at a fashionable entertainment, and people wouldn't enjoy it if it were otherwise.

Deville handed in Mrs. Eton according to promise; but his spirits had evaporated, and, when the lady bantered him on his want of agreeability, he pleaded a severe headache. In handing Mrs. Eton an ice-cream, he started so suddenly that the saucer nearly dropped from his hand. He found himself face to face with Louise Morton, who was hanging on her father's arm.

Deville's emotion was so great that Mrs. Eton's attention was drawn to it, and she said, "You must have seen a ghost, and a very pretty one too if it's Miss Morton you are looking at. But, Deville, she isn't as pretty as I am; so you needn't look as if you

wanted to eat her up. Please get me some champagne, and take some yourself. Perhaps it will brighten up your ideas."

Déville paid no attention to these remarks, but helped Mrs. Eton mechanically to champagne, and filled a large glass for himself. "Toss glasses with me," she said, "and I will give you a toast," which he did without a smile, and she repeated the lines he had quoted to her that evening—

"Oh, when amidst the gay I meet  
That beaming smile of thine!"

"You don't say that to me any more," she said, "and you look as if you would like to say it to some one else. Oh, fickle man!" and she pulled in vexation a flower from one of the vases on the supper-table.

Déville turned to see if Miss Morton was still in the room, and saw her looking intently at him. He could not help returning her gaze with the same ardor, when, what was his surprise, to see her draw herself up haughtily and, looking indignantly upon him, turn her head in another direction.

This cut him to the heart, and all the life seemed taken out of him for the rest of the evening. Do what he would, he never found Miss Morton looking at him again, and shortly afterward the Morton family left for their home.

Pretty Mrs. Eton tried in vain to rouse up Déville; but, as he would not respond to her flattering sallies, she requested him to call her husband, as she wanted to go home, and she said, poutingly, "I suppose, Mr. Déville, you will put my cloak on for me and put me in the carriage?"

"Of course," answered Déville; "it will give me great pleasure, if Mr. Eton does not object."

"Mr. Eton object!" she said, with a smile; "he might object, though, to your kissing his wife on the forehead."

Déville started as if he had been stung by a nettle, and went in search of Mr. Eton, whom he found still at the card-table, with a bottle of wine at his elbow and a large pile of gold pieces at his right hand.

However, he gave up the game when Déville came for him, saying to his friends, "I never keep my darling waiting; she is always so thoughtful of me." As soon as Mr. Eton was out of hearing his cronies laughed aloud, though nothing was said, and, gathering

up their money, they departed. It is the covert sneer that injures a reputation more than outspoken words.

Mr. Eton met his wife at the dressing-room door, where Deville was assisting her to put on her cloak.

He was more than ordinarily attentive, as if to atone for his recent neglect, and pressed her hand warmly when he found an opportunity to do so. Then, turning to Mr. Eton, he said, "Mrs. Eton is waiting for you to escort her to the carriage, unless you will permit me to have that honor."

"Certainly, my boy," said Mr. Eton, "you are entitled to that after having had charge of her all the evening and allowing me to win three hundred dollars." So Deville handed the lady to her carriage and gave her hand the last warm pressure, which made her supremely happy. "Poor boy!" said she to her husband, "he has had such a dreadful headache all the evening that he has scarcely spoken a word."

"Yes," said Mr. Eton, "I expect Vandeusen's gas-lights had something to do with it;—but, Fanny, I intend to beat that. No man shall have a better lighted house than mine. Send round in the morning, darling, and ask Mr. Deville to dine with us at six, and invite two or three nice young fellows to meet him. I like Deville; he is a trump, and will make his way in the world."

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## CHAPTER VII.

### THE DIAMOND-ROBBERY.

THAT night, when pretty Mrs. Eton, after kissing her husband affectionately, tripped up-stairs to her boudoir, the old gentleman drew his easy-chair in front of a blazing wood fire and lighted a fine cigar—a pleasure he had been looking forward to for some time. It was not the custom in those days to smoke at a house where an entertainment was given.

Mr. Eton was rejoicing in his heart that his wife was the most beautiful woman in Vandeusen's ball-room, and that she wore the most expensive diamonds in New York.

"How angry Morton must have felt," he said to himself, "when he saw those beautiful stones on my wife's neck—and he is



such a judge of diamonds! Then those four stones in her hair! There are none like them in New York. Why, I paid Bullion & Co. eight thousand dollars for them, and they could not be duplicated now for ten thousand." Just at this moment his soliloquy was interrupted by a piercing shriek from Mrs. Eton's boudoir, and a moment after her French maid appeared at the top of the stairs uttering Gallic expletives faster than any short-hand writer could take them down.

Mr. Eton's first thought was that a mouse had got into the room; then it occurred to him that the curtains had taken fire, and he started for the door to give the alarm. But the cries of the maid, "*Ah, ma pauvre, madame!*" checked his course, and, seizing the poker, he rushed up-stairs, having no doubt that a burglar was in the house. He found his wife lying in a fainting-fit on the sofa.

The servants were soon aroused, and one of them sent post-haste for a doctor. Meanwhile, Mr. Eton, discovering that his wife was breathing, sent the maid for the cologne. "Hurry, hang it!" he cried. "I never knew a Frenchwoman to be of any use in time of trouble."

But while all this was going on, Mrs. Eton suddenly sat bolt upright on the sofa, and, opening her eyes, screamed, "Oh, my diamonds, my diamonds! they are gone, lost forever, trampled to pieces in that crowd; oh, my diamonds! And Mrs. Morton will still have her twenty-five-thousand-dollar set! Oh, Eton, pity your poor wife!"

"What," cried Mr. Eton, springing to his feet, "your diamonds lost?"—and forgetting his endearing manner of addressing his wife—"how the devil did you lose them? Do you think I can buy fifty thousand dollars' worth of diamonds every day? Here, James, tell the coachman to harness up the horses. You must have dropped them at Vandeusen's! I knew how it would be when I let you wear them. I bought them on speculation—the best bargain I have made this year; and now to lose them as if they were so many brass buttons!" He walked up and down the room in a towering rage, swearing at the French maid for not fastening the diamonds better on her mistress's neck, and wishing everything to the devil generally.

"But, my darling," cried Mrs. Eton, in piteous tones, "all my diamonds are gone—those I wore around my neck and those I wore in my hair."

"What," exclaimed Mr. Eton, "eight thousand more? Have your ear-rings gone too, madam?" he said, sarcastically.

She put her hands to her pretty ears, and screamed that they too were gone.

"Fifty-eight thousand dollars gone to the devil!" roared Eton. "You have been robbed. But I will go at once to Vandeußen's and solve this mystery," and, hurrying to the street, he jumped into his carriage, ordering the coachman to drive as fast as possible to the "d—d gas-man's."

When Mr. Eton arrived at Vandeußen's he found that establishment in a great state of excitement. The rich banker, Mr. Morton, had just arrived to see if his wife had let her diamonds fall upon the ball-room floor. Mr. Livingston had come to ask the same question, his wife having lost her whole set, excepting her ear-rings. Mrs. Jones was bereft of two diamond bracelets, and Mr. Jones of his diamond-set watch. Mr. Phillips had had his pocket picked of ten thousand dollars in bank-notes, which he had put in his pocket for safe-keeping rather than leave the money at home; and Mrs. Vandeußen was minus her second-best set of diamonds, worth ten thousand dollars.

"Hang it!" said Mr. Eton, "all the burglars in New York must have been at the ball, and the d—d gas-lights helped 'em to carry out their designs. But, thank heaven, I'm no worse off than others, and the world can't laugh at me. I am glad my darling is not to blame after all. I might have known she wasn't careless, she is always so thoughtful."

After getting a full account of all the robberies, that he might retail it to his wife, Mr. Eton drove home.

He found Mrs. Eton still weeping. "Cheer up, my pet," he exclaimed; "we are not the only victims. The Mortons, the Livingstons, the Phillipses, and even the Vandeußens have been robbed, and in the most expert manner I ever heard of. My own opinion is that the diamonds were melted up by the heat of Vandeußen's gas-lights, for I never was in a hotter place in my life. But, Fanny, my darling, you shall have another set of diamonds more beautiful than the others. I'll let 'em see that old Eton isn't the boy to squirm over a set of fifty-thousand-dollar diamonds. I'll send to Paris for the handsomest set to be found there. I wonder if old Morton can do better than that."

Mrs. Eton dried her tears and threw her arms around her husband's neck. She called him her dear old darling, and said she

loved him more and more every day of her life—which made the old gentleman so happy that he sat down forthwith and wrote to his agent in Paris, directing him to procure at once a set of first-quality paste diamonds in imitation of a sixty-thousand-dollar set like the last sent him, and authorizing him to draw on the house of Eton & Co. for fifteen hundred dollars, but making the bill out for sixty thousand, as usual in such cases.

After performing this act of liberality Mr. Eton smiled lovingly and lighted his cigar.

"This," he mused, "will increase my credit with the public, and when the papers announce, as I shall take care they'll do, that I have purchased a sixty-thousand-dollar set of diamonds for my wife, my credit will go higher than ever." After smoking his cigar, this good man went to bed at three o'clock in the morning, and slept the sleep of the virtuous.

Next day the papers had what in those days was considered a very full report of the Vandeusen ball, including an account of the wonderful gas-lights, and supplemented by a statement of the daring robbery of diamonds actually taken from the persons of the guests. Such a thing had never been heard of before in the history of thieving. Some thought it was the work of waiters from the Hôtel d'Or, whose proprietor, Monsieur Jacques Volavol, had the contract for furnishing the good things consumed at the supper, with the exception of the wines, which were imported especially for the occasion.

Mr. Smith, the sexton of St. Vitus's Church, who was indispensable on all great occasions of this kind, had stood at the door while the company was entering, to see that no one entered that had not received an invitation. There were, however, some people mean enough to say that an invitation could be procured through Smith to any party for a liberal *douceur*, and the robbers may have gotten in in this way; but Smith came out with a disclaimer in the "Post" three columns long, but which contained nothing to throw any light on the subject.

The reason for suspecting the waiters from the Hôtel d'Or was that some twenty massive gold salt-cellars and a quantity of silverware had disappeared. It was thought that such an inroad upon the plate could only have been made by the servants; but Monsieur Volavol made oath before a magistrate that he was well acquainted with every *garçon* in his employ, and was sure they all could be trusted with millions without appropriating a cent.

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The creese that I had purchased the day before was sticking in the old man's heart.

## CHAPTER VIII.

## THE ROBBERY—MR. ETON'S DINNER-PARTY.

AFTER many days' search by the police, not a particle of information in regard to the diamond-robbery could be obtained. The thieves evidently understood their business, and had done their work well. A regular system of surveillance was now established to see what the future would bring forth.

A good many jokes were cracked at Mr. Vandeußen's expense. Some said it served the rich people right, who invested so much money in diamonds merely to imitate the aristocracy of Europe while there were so many half-starved wretches at their doors.

But the interest in the matter gradually died out, and the election of a mayor coming off about that time, everything else was forgotten in the excitement of that momentous event, on the issue of which every New Yorker seemed to have staked his happiness.

As for the principal sufferers—they seemed to take little trouble to recover their property in the way of offering rewards, although they put the cases into the hands of the chief of police. Mr. Eton seemed rather pleased at the loss of his property, and when any one said anything to him on the subject he would remark that sixty thousand dollars would be a heavy loss to some people, but the house of Eton & Co. could stand it; and then would add that "an order has gone to Paris for another set of diamonds for my wife. She shan't be disappointed, she is always so very thoughtful of me."

The chief of police had hardly reached home after the party when news was brought to him of the robbery. In spite of his imperturbability, he stood aghast at the news; but, seizing his hat, he rushed into the street, and, calling one of the rickety old hacks known as "night-hawks," he drove with all speed to Mr. Vandeußen's house.

He could learn nothing there beyond what we have related, and he took his leave with an assurance to Mr. Vandeußen that the police would be on the robber's track before daylight. But, alas! he had said the same thing often before. The police had found so little after all their searchings that he had little real hope of their finding out anything in this case.

Returning to the carriage, the chief took from his pocket-book a card on which was written Allan Dare's address, No. 229 Ann

Street. He ordered the driver to wait for him at a point not far distant. The chief knew the house very well, as he did most others in New York, and Allan had given him all the necessary instructions about entering it.

On arriving at the house he felt for the knocker of the door, underneath which was a little knob. He pressed the knob, and a sound was heard like the striking of a clock. Presently the door was opened by Allan Dare himself.

It was now past four o'clock in the morning, and the murmuring sound of the city waking from its slumbers came faintly upon the air. Soon the roar of wheels, like the sound of Niagara, would be heard in all quarters.

Allan Dare showed the chief into a small parlor, where an elderly woman and her daughter were sitting near a small table lighted by a couple of candles; but he did not seem to think it necessary to bring them to the notice of the chief.

"I wish to see you in private," said the chief. "I have some news that will startle you."

"I suppose," said Allan, "you come to tell me of the Vandeu-sen robbery, but I heard of that an hour ago."

The chief started. "How can that be," he said, "when I have just come from there, and you left the house with me at half-past one o'clock?"

"That's easily explained," said Allan. "This young woman was installed in the house early in the evening. I saw Mr. Vandeu-sen before dark, and told him it was your wish that she should be there—that it would be necessary to have some one in the dressing-rooms to keep a lookout over matters generally and see that no improper persons were present. This young woman is named Gabrielle, and she is my cleverest detective."

"A female detective!" exclaimed the chief. "I never heard of such a thing."

"That's part of the Le Coque system," said Allan Dare. "We employ all kinds of tools, and often use women. They are more honest than men, and a great deal shrewder. Now, sir, I'll show you how much has been done since Mrs. Ruggles was robbed. After dining with you on that day, I called on the landlady and took her into my confidence, which flattered her greatly. I told her that the reputation of her house was at stake, and if she would follow my advice it would never be known that a robbery had taken place there; that it was necessary for me to place a female detec-

tive in the house to shadow Jane Ross, the chambermaid, who evidently took great interest in her boarder, Mr. Cole, and would no doubt inform that person that his room had been examined. I told her she must let it be understood that the woman was a new servant.

"So Gabrielle was put on watch at once. Jane Ross was delighted at getting somebody to assist her, and immediately turned over to Gabrielle the rooms of the two maiden ladies, and told her she must carry water to Mrs. Ruggles's room.

"Finding that Jane was getting ready to go out, Gabrielle prepared to follow her. I had already explained matters to the post-master, and he gave orders for one of his clerks to be on the watch for the girl Ross when she came to post letters. When Jane went out, Gabrielle, assuming a disguise she had handy, followed her to the post-office. Gabrielle stole in the back way, and, having secured the letter which Jane dropped in the box, as was arranged with the post-master, reached home by a short cut before Jane got there. Here is the letter, and we are as wise after reading it as we were before, but it shows that the girl Ross and Cole are in collusion."

"This is tampering with the mails," said the chief of police, gravely, "and is a penal offense—"

"In which the post-master is a party," laughed Allan. "Why, my dear sir, if it were allowed to use the mail for every illicit purpose there would be no security to the public—the mischief would be irreparable. In France this is a common method of detecting knaves. Besides, I have removed the seal so carefully and sealed it up again that no one in the world can find it out. The letter will be returned to the post-office, and when the owner calls for it he will be followed to his retreat."

"Well," said the chief, "you do beat all I ever heard of. But let me see a copy of the letter."

Allan handed him the letter; but he could make nothing of it. It was all Greek to him.

"Can *you* read it?" said the chief.

"No," said Allan, "but I hope soon to do so. I can generally manage to read letters of this kind, but this is a little more troublesome than usual. It is ingenious without doubt, and the girl is a smart one."

The letter was as follows:

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— tojouren bunco-shadowed — lepaten eltheno 720 × × leonter  
dikerply 1000 — totilliy royonge deheade popomen 200—”

“What do you think of it?” said Allan Dare.

“I don’t think at all,” said the chief; “it’s beyond my comprehension.”

“Well,” said the detective, “it proves to me that there is an intelligent set of men, holding a position in society, that are concerned in the villainies that have puzzled you so much of late—and I will prove it. When Gabrielle was at Mr. Vandusen’s she noticed a tall, dark-complexioned man come up-stairs into the gentlemen’s room, which was Mr. Vandusen’s bedroom. He seemed to be moving about with an object, brushing his hair and looking at the pictures, until finally he said, ‘My girl, I feel quite ill. Won’t you get me a little brandy?’ She answered, ‘You’ll find plenty down-stairs, sir.’ ‘Oh,’ said he, ‘it’s so infernal hot down there that I had to leave for fear of fainting.’ Gabrielle put on an innocent expression, and the gentleman began to pay her compliments, with which she pretended to be much pleased. Finally he gave her five dollars to go for the brandy. She went a few steps, but returning in a moment found the man, with the girl who was in the ladies’ dressing-room, looking into a drawer. They must have had a pass-key, for Gabrielle had examined all the drawers on first going up-stairs and found them secure. As soon as they heard Gabrielle returning, the drawer was closed by the girl, who pushed her back against it; but, unluckily for her, her apron-tie got caught, and she had to tear it out in getting away. As the man and the girl moved out of the room, Gabrielle heard the girl say, ‘Don’t mind her; she’s a half-idiot.’ Gabrielle secured the apron-tie as evidence, and here it is.

“During the evening I was up and down stairs half a dozen times looking about, and on one of these occasions Gabrielle whispered to me, ‘The rogues are here,’ and pointed out the man I have just mentioned. As the party was breaking up, I saw him standing by the ladies’ dressing-room door waiting to escort Miss Morton to her carriage. I heard her call him ‘Mr. Cole!’”

“Thunder and lightning!” exclaimed the chief, “after this I’ll have a corps of detectives made up entirely of women.”

“Well, you see,” said Allan Dare, “I am on the track of the fox, but it may be a month yet before I run him to cover.”

“A month is a long time in the present excited state of the public mind,” said the chief.

"Yes," said Allan, "but remember that for the past year you have got nothing, and here are palpable facts in your possession. To-morrow I shall find out all about that girl at Vandeußen's, and, as nothing more can be done to-night, I think you had better go home and take some rest. I am now going to escort these good people home."

So the chief departed and rejoined his anxious wife and daughter, who were wondering what had become of him.

When Allan Dare returned to his domicile he threw himself on a sofa, and was soon in a sound sleep, undisturbed by worldly cares.

On the day after the ball there was a dinner at Mr. Eton's at five o'clock, to which were invited Robert Deville, George May, Edwin Livingston, and Alphonse Robinet—all young society men, making, with the host and hostess, six in all.

Mr. May had never been introduced to Deville, but was well acquainted with the others. Deville was rather taken by surprise at the manner in which Mr. May met the introduction, giving him a formal bow and not appearing to notice his proffered hand. May's manner, if not insulting, was anything but cordial.

Devilie remembered that he had seen May the night before standing with Miss Morton; but at the moment he was so taken up with the beautiful girl that her escort had gone out of his mind altogether. May recalled Deville as the man whom he was so anxious to call to an account the night before. Now that he could closely scan Deville's herculean form, he thought to himself that it would be a hazardous undertaking to meddle with him unless provided with a pistol.

Devilie received his repulse with cool *hauteur*, and took a seat beside Mrs. Eton on the sofa.

Mr. Eton had just finished reading the evening paper. "We have good news," he said; "the police are on the track of the robbers." And then he read an interesting account of how English Charley, the policeman, had certain proof that the robbery was the work of a gang that had just come over from London, after operating in like manner in that metropolis.

"I'll bet five hundred dollars that those robbers will never be found, and that you never will hear of your diamonds again," said Deville to Mrs. Eton.

"I don't care much if I don't hear of them again," said Mrs. Eton. "My husband has promised me a new set, and I shall be in

a flutter until they come. Only think, they are to come over in the Elmira, and she won't be here for forty-five long days. Mr. Eton says he doesn't care about the loss at all ; that it was a thing that might happen to any one."

"Yes," said Mr. Eton, "of course it might. Didn't it happen to Mrs. Morton ? I wonder how old Morton stood it, and whether he sent to Paris for another set ?"

"Mr. Eton says," chimed in Mrs. Eton, "that the house of Eton & Co. can stand the loss and not feel it."

"Yes," interposed Eton, "twice as much as that"—which made the company stare.

"Darling," said Mrs. Eton, "may I tell them what my next set is to cost ?"

"Yes," said her husband, "but they must not mention it"—knowing full well the news would soon be all over town.

"The new set," said Mrs. Eton, "will cost sixty thousand dollars !"

"And," said Mr. Eton, "if old Morton or even Vandeußen can do better than that, why I will do better still."

"I don't know what Mr. Vandeußen can do, sir," said May, "but I know that Mr. Morton can afford to spend half a million dollars in diamonds if it suits him—that is, if his wife would let him invest his money in that way."

"Humph !" said Eton, "wives are very convenient things when a man doesn't want to spend his money. Now, my wife never interferes in such matters."

"No, my dear," said Mrs. Eton, "I never do. You might spend a hundred thousand on diamonds for me, and I should not object."

"Pray, Mr. May," said Eton, "as you seem to know so much of Mr. Morton's affairs, how much is he worth ?"

"To my knowledge," said May, "he is worth over a million in stocks, and he owns blocks of houses down town."

"Ah !" said Eton, "good investments ; but give me ships, and let me be my own insurer. Why, sir, if we went to war with England to-morrow, I have ships enough on the ocean that, properly manned and equipped, would sweep the commerce of Great Britain from the seas."

"But," said Deville, "she would gobble up all your vessels with their cargoes before they could get into port."

"Humph !" said Eton, "I didn't think of that."

Dinner was now announced, and Deville handed Mrs. Eton to the table and sat at her left—"next my heart," she whispered to him, "for that is your place." The dinner passed off as all such entertainments do when people are all determined to be agreeable. May seemed a little unsociable at first, remembering how Deville had looked at Miss Morton the night before ; but noticing the tender smiles Mrs. Eton served out to him with the dessert, and in what low tones they talked together, he concluded that they must be desperately in love with each other, and that it was by accident that Deville had stared so hard at Miss Morton the night of the ball.

When the conversation was general, Deville took such a prominent part in it and expressed himself so elegantly, that May could not help being attracted by him, and finally desired to know him better.

When the dinner was over, and Mr. Eton excused himself in order to fulfill an engagement, Mrs. Eton ordered coffee and maraschino in her pretty little reception-room, where the party gave themselves up to enjoyment. Under the fascinating smiles of the hostess the hours flew like minutes.

George May had now become fascinated with Deville, and evinced not the least jealousy because Mrs. Eton showered all her favors upon him. He was welcome to them all so long as he didn't look too intently at Miss Morton. In the course of conversation he asked Deville if he had noticed her at the ball, and to his surprise was told that he had not, as he was very near-sighted and could hardly tell one woman from another at a little distance.

"What a fool I am," muttered May to himself, "making myself jealous for nothing ! This man is too much of a gentleman to behave rudely ;" and he told Deville he should take great pleasure in introducing him to the Mortons, who he said were most agreeable people.

This unexpected good fortune made Deville happy for the night, so that he could afford to throw away a good many smiles and soft sayings on Mrs. Eton.

That night Deville could not sleep, so happy was he at the idea of seeing the beautiful girl that had entranced his senses, while the previous night he could not sleep because he feared he might never have an opportunity of making her acquaintance—for Mr. Morton was considered aristocratic in his notions, and very careful whom he invited to his house. In business transactions Deville had



always found him very formal, and had never given him a hint that he should be glad to see him at his domicile.

When Deville finally managed to sleep, his dreams were tinged with the brightest hues. The mingled roses and lilies of Miss Morton's complexion were ever before him. All night long he was gazing on those blissful lips, which looked so rich in the kisses they seemed to invite. That lovely neck, with its heavenly supports, seemed the realization of all that was beautiful in the sculptor's art, while, in the dimpled chin, cupids seemed to nestle, ready to shoot their arrows at any unwary intruder on those virgin charms. Her form—faintly shadowed, yet not concealed—floated ever before him, and in his imagination her coal-black hair was brushing against his burning temples.

He awoke tired and feverish, notwithstanding his dreams had been so agreeable, and he awoke to confess to himself that he was deeply in love with this raven-haired girl, who, for aught he knew, might be affianced to the handsome George May, a man that seemed to possess all the qualities that appeal most strongly to a woman's heart.

"'Faint heart ne'er won fair lady,'" said Deville to himself, "and I will risk all I have on the hazard of the die." Thus meditating, he dressed himself with his usual care, and went to his office.

The first thing that attracted his notice as he passed through the streets was a placard announcing that the Manhattan Gas Company had been formed, with two hundred subscribers to the stock; capital, one million dollars. Mr. Vandusen, president; Mr. Morton, vice-president; Mr. Eton and nineteen other prominent citizens, directors.

Devil found his own name included, which he thought strange, considering that he had never been asked for the use of it; but he accepted the situation as a compliment and decided to subscribe. No doubt a good many other people found themselves directors or stockholders in the Manhattan Gas Company without any action of their own in the matter, for this is a common way of inaugurating enterprises in this country, which sometimes turn out well, but oftener do not.

A charter had been procured in Albany not long before, and, as soon as the stock was subscribed for, the company was supposed to be on the flood-tide to fortune. The streets of New York would no longer be obscured by darkness so as to be unsafe

for the citizens at night and disgraceful to the leading city of America.

For the present we will leave all those engaged in this laudable enterprise. Mr. and Mrs. Vandeußen and their pretty daughter were happy beyond expression, and Mr. Vandeußen determined to give his wife another set of black pearls as soon as the gas-company should declare their first dividend.

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## CHAPTER IX.

### THE RED-WAFER MAN.

It was a dull, misty day in April, and great drops of moisture stood on the overcoats of the wayfarers. It was yet early, but the hum of the city began to be heard from every quarter, and the lazy smoke from the forges and manufactories, forcing its way aloft through the thick atmosphere, made all surrounding objects as somber as the most gloomy ascetic could desire.

The mechanics were just beginning to move toward their places of labor, with their tools and tin-kettles in hand, and the East River ferry-boats were busy landing their human freight.

Just before the Jackson Street ferry-boat touched the city pier, a man of sturdy mien was seen approaching it.

Occasionally he would pause for a moment at a post or at the corner of some old building, and when he moved on there could be seen a red wafer sticking where he had halted, which was not there before.

A close observer might have noticed several of the passengers coming from the ferry-boat carefully examining these wafers, nodding their heads, and passing on.

After leaving the ferry, the stranger passed up Jackson Street to Grand Street, and thence went on till he stopped at the corner of Grand Street and East Broadway, where he leaned for a moment against a wooden railing on the steps of a house. When he moved on, the red wafer that he had affixed to the railing could be discerned at a distance of a hundred yards.

Again the mysterious stranger plodded on, and, turning into Ludlow Street, fastened a wafer to a house in the middle of the first square. Then, passing through Ludlow Street and crossing

East Broadway, he stopped with his back against a white paling, and left his red mark on the fence as before. Then he strode down Pike Street and up Madison Street, and, walking up the steps of a house, knocked at the door. To the girl who answered his summons he gave a blank envelope containing a red wafer, directing it to be given to the master of the house. The stranger now walked to the Bowery, where at intervals the red wafer was fastened to some conspicuous part of a house, without anybody being the wiser as to how it was done. Sometimes the man would stoop as if to adjust his shoe, and, when he rose, the red wafer was left to mark his advent. It was clear that he took great care that no one should see him affix the wafers. On he trudged till he came to the corner of Broadway and Leonard Street, where there was a restaurant. He leaned for a moment against the entrance and then went on, with the inevitable wafer sticking to the lintel of the door, where any one would suppose that some child had stuck it in sport.

The person that seemed engaged in this puerile amusement now passed into the restaurant, and, taking a seat in a dark corner, ordered a substantial breakfast—a beefsteak with mushrooms, hot rolls, potatoes, and a bottle of wine.

After disposing of the steak, he ordered woodcock on toast, and thus managed to appease his appetite—which was very good, as he had had nothing to eat that day, and it was now nearly noon.

The man with a good appetite lingered long over his meal, which he seemed to enjoy after his arduous labors. The waiter stared to see one man devouring such a quantity of food and drink, for the establishment did not often have so liberal a customer. He would not have been surprised had the stranger ordered a round of beef and another bottle of wine.

The waiter saw that the stranger was a gentleman in spite of his rough dress, for waiters are generally keen-witted fellows. He noticed that the man always used his napkin, and carved his woodcock as daintily as if he were doing it for a lady. The waiter hoped he would leave him one of the birds after demolishing so much steak—for our waiter was of aristocratic taste, and seldom got a chance at the long-billed luxuries. But the stranger consumed the birds entire, and did not even leave the waiter a drop of wine.

The waiter's grief, however, was somewhat assuaged when the stranger finally handed him a ten-dollar bill, and presented him, ere he passed into the street, with one dollar in change for himself.

"I knew he was nobby," said the waiter, gazing affectionately at the coin; "only nobs do that. Even the merchants don't give a feller over a shilling."

The stranger now took up his line of march again along Broadway into Cortlandt Street, where he stuck two wafers; then down to Church Street, along to Washington Street to the Battery, where he stuck several wafers. He went on to the Bowling Green, and there proceeded with particular care, attaching wafers on the iron railing only in front of certain houses, most of them houses of note. By this time he had expended a large stock of wafers.

Still, his errand did not seem to be half finished. He carefully examined all the houses along the Battery, which at that time were occupied by people of fashion—who would have laughed had they been told that in forty years not a fashionable residence would be found below Washington Square, and that the beautiful Battery would become a landing-place for emigrants.

After sticking red wafers on many houses, the stranger passed through Bridge Street into Whitehall Street and went through the same performance there, after which he went along Front Street to Wall Street, then into William Street until he reached Maiden Lane, forever sticking his wafers, although nobody ever saw him in the act. In this manner he kept on all through that damp, dismal day. From seven in the morning until five in the afternoon had he traveled without sign of fatigue; at the latter hour he was still employed in sticking wafers, and had arrived in the vicinity of the City Hall.

Then he crossed over to Chambers Street, and, placing a wafer on the door of the police-office, drew a long breath and ejaculated, "Thank heaven, that job's done!"

The man then went around to the corner of Reade Street and Broadway, and, entering a restaurant, ordered a private room, and partook of a supper which in quality and quantity differed little from his former meal. Then he lay down on a sofa, and, ordering the waiter to call him at ten o'clock, sank into a profound slumber.

At ten o'clock at night, in the days of which we have been writing, the streets of New York wore a very quiet appearance. There were no long lines of illuminated shop-windows, and it was only in front of the places of amusement that some slight effort was made to dispel the gloom of night.

The City Hall and Park were as gloomy as they well could be,

and all of the streets to the northward were anything but inviting. Within ten minutes' walk of the office of the chief of police stood the Five Points—as dreadful an abode of misery, vice, and crime as ever existed. Wayfarers were careful how they moved about these places alone and at night.

Not so the wafer-man when at ten o'clock he was roused from his slumbers. He lighted a cigar, and sallied forth into the night, passing the City Hall and crossing the Park diagonally in the direction of Frankfort Street.

A cold, drizzly rain chilled the stranger to the bone, and he frequently stumbled over the seats placed under the wide-spreading trees for the accommodation of visitors.

There was no play that night in the Park Theatre, which was closed for repairs; consequently its large lamps were not lighted, and the surroundings were dark and dismal. The lamp at the southeast corner of the Park was extinguished, doubtless by the wind, so that all was in obscurity.

The wafer-sticker puffed his cigar to enable him to ascertain by its light when he had reached the gate, when suddenly there appeared before him a large man pointing a pistol at his head.

“Your money or your life!” said the robber, “and don't you open your lips.”

Our traveler was not in the least dismayed, but quickly thrusting the pistol aside with one hand, he planted a blow with the other right between the robber's eyes, who fell to the ground as if struck by a sledge-hammer.

“I am afraid I've killed him!” exclaimed the wafer-man. “I ought not to have hit so hard. Perhaps the poor devil has a family starving at home for want of bread. If he had only known it, I would have assisted him for the asking.” He stooped and raised the prostrate robber to a sitting position; but the man fell helpless when his hold was relaxed. No assistance was at hand. The rain had driven the guardians of the night to their boozing dens; so the wafer-man waited to see if his victim would come to. At length the prostrate individual began to saw the air with his hands and moan piteously.

“Thank God!” said the other, “he is not dead.” And he waited patiently for further developments, lighting another cigar to cheer the solitude.

Presently he heard the sound of wheels and saw the lamps of a carriage, and knew by experience that it was one of the city “night-

hawks" looking for a fare. He called the driver, and, finding that he was not engaged, told him to bring one of his lamps to look at a friend who had fallen and hurt himself.

The hackman left his sorry beasts to take care of themselves, and the two sought the spot where the robber had fallen. They found him sitting up sawing the air with one hand and with the other trying to loosen his cravat, while his eyes were almost starting from his head.

On loosening his cravat, the robber breathed freely, but soon fell back on the ground again.

"Let us see where he lives," said our wafer-sticker; "perhaps he has a card in his pocket. Hold your light," and he began to search the robber's pockets.

"I thought you knowed him," said the driver, suspiciously. "You said as how he was a friend of yourn."

"And so I do know him," said the other; "but you don't suppose I know where every man of my acquaintance lives, do you? You mind what I tell you, and don't ask any questions." The driver, after looking at the stranger's powerful frame, concluded that it would be well to do as he told him.

Suddenly the coachman, in moving about, picked up a silver-mounted pistol, exclaiming, "A jeweling-pistol, or I'm a ninky."

"That's mine," said our street-traveler. "It dropped out of my side-pocket; give it to me." Seizing it, he thrust it into his breast-pocket.

Then the coachee, holding his light in search of some name or number, suddenly let the reflection fall on the man's face. "Mother of Moses!" he exclaimed, "if he ain't been kicked atween the eyes by a hoss with four shoes on one foot, and his nose is as big as a six-pound sweet-potater."

"Yes," said the other, "he got into a little row this evening, and had the worst of it. I was trying to get him home. But here's his address," taking a card from the man's pocket-book. "I ought to have remembered the number if I'd thought for a moment."

"Yes," said coachee, "I often forget the number of my own coach," and he eyed the stranger again suspiciously.

"Now, don't be too facetious, driver," said the other, "and mind what I say to you, or you may have your number taken from you." Here, as if by accident, he displayed a silver badge, a circumstance that made the coachee very mum.

"Now, driver, help me lift my friend into your carriage." And they both took hold of the man to raise him.

"He's a stunner," said the driver ; " weighs two hundred and sixty pounds at least."

"More than that," said the other ; " two hundred and sixty-eight, to my knowledge."

With some difficulty they got the robber to his feet and started toward the carriage. He was very shaky on his legs, and his head wobbled about like that of a Chinese mandarin. But when they got close to the carriage he made a dart at the open door, and mumbled out, "Drive home."

"He jumps into a carriage like an eel into a eel-pot," said the coachee. "'Tain't the fust time by a long shot, he's rid in a 'night-hawk.'"

"Drive as fast as you can to 360 William Street," said our acquaintance, "if those old rats of yours can get out of a walk, and half a dollar extra if you make good time." The half dollar extra had the desired effect, and the ancient chariot rattled so rapidly over the rough cobble-stones that it almost put out the lights.

The robber now began to talk incoherently. "Don't take me to jail. I couldn't see Flossy starve before my eyes. The pistol wasn't loaded. I started out to pawn it. Don't strike me again. I throw up the sponge."

"Don't be afraid," said his companion ; "I'm taking you home. What is the number of your room ?"

"No. 8—third floor—will have a light in the window—she always does when I'm out ; but I'm awful sick and faint, and my head feels as big as a barrel."

The carriage now stopped in front of a house in William Street. There was a light in the third-story window, and a woman's face looked out on hearing the sound of the carriage-wheels.

The driver jumped down and assisted the disabled man into the house.

"What's your fare, driver ?" said the stranger.

"Three dollars, sir, cos this has been a hawful wet job, and I have sprained my wrist liftin' that gentleman, and won't be able to drive for a week."

"There's five for you," was the reply. "Now put off ; we shall not want you any more."

"Thankee, sir," said coachee. "I knowed you was a gentle-

man by the cut of your jib. May you die in a feather-bed!" and with this hearty wish he drove off.

The stranger then assisted his companion up-stairs, and, after some trouble, succeeded in landing him on the third floor. A door stood wide open. "That's my room," said the robber as he entered the apartment and tumbled upon a sofa.

As the stranger followed his companion into the room, a most beautiful vision struck his sight. A girl of eighteen stood in the center of the room, awaiting the return of her father, whom she had been expecting for the past two hours.

Her lips, half open with expectation and anxiety, showed a set of teeth like pearls. Her beautiful arms were bare, and a light shawl was thrown over her shoulders. Her tiny feet were incased in a pair of faded pink slippers, and her flaxen hair hung in graceful ringlets down her back. Her beautiful blue eyes were swimming in tears of anxiety. Altogether, the stranger was certain he had never beheld a being half so beautiful.

As soon as her father fell on the sofa she flew toward him and clasped his head in her arms, covering his face with kisses. "My darling papa," she said, "what has happened to you? Who has done you this fearful wrong? May God forgive him, for I never will!"

The stranger stood quietly observing the pair, and wondering that such an ill-looking father should be blessed with so beautiful a child.

"I don't know anything about it, my darling," said the father. "Give me some brandy, quick, for I believe I am dying."

The girl flew to the adjoining room, and returned with a bottle and tumbler. Filling the glass one third full, she handed it to her father, who drank it eagerly, exclaiming, "Ah! that has saved my life." Then he fell back on the sofa as if he would go to sleep.

"But, papa dear," said the daughter, her eyes filling with tears, "how did you get into this dreadful condition? What has happened? You have been cruelly used."

"Ask that gentleman," replied her father, "and thank him, for he brought me home."

"I found him at the south end of the Park," said the stranger, "lying senseless on the ground in the rain. I procured a hack and brought him home."

"Oh, thank you, sir, a thousand times," exclaimed this young woman. "May God bless you!" And she wept and kissed her fa-



ther's wounds until he rather pushed her away. He was a piteous sight to behold. His head was swollen, his eyes nearly closed, and his nose had increased in size until it was out of all proportion.

"What vexes me most, darling," said the father, "is that any man should be able to say that he could knock me down, for I never yet met the man whom I couldn't handle with ease. The man who served me such a trick must have been a powerful fellow."

"But, papa, who would want to knock you down? What did you do to provoke it?"

"Perhaps," interrupted the stranger, "it was a robber, and your father may have been robbed."

"I robbed, indeed!" said the man. "Why, sir, there were but twenty-five cents in my exchequer when I left the house, and no bank to which I could go to for more."

"I thought as much," said the stranger to himself—"a case of pure desperation: this beautiful child starving, and he without the means to get her a meal!"

How many men would be saved from crime if some of the philanthropists who will their money to build charitable institutions would, while living, open their purse-strings to suffering humanity! Half the crime that is committed is due to the meanness of these lauded philanthropists, who close their hearts while living that they may have monuments erected to themselves after their death.

"But, papa," said the girl, "why did you go out this dark, rainy night? You could not better your condition before to-morrow, and I was not suffering. I wonder you were not afraid to go out when there are so many bad characters about."

"I afraid, child!" said her father, excitedly. "I am not afraid of any two men I ever met with in a fair fight, and no one man could handle me unless he took me unawares, and struck me when I was not expecting it."

To look at him, one could easily realize that he might make good his boast, for he was six feet high and stout in proportion, while his powerful arms and bony hands bespoke strength almost unequalled.

"Yet," said the stranger, "you were knocked down from in front. Can you say that more than one man attacked you?"

"I can't say," replied the father, pondering over his words. "All I know is that only a man of your size and build could have dealt me such a blow. Look here, stranger," he said, "you have taken great interest in my case. It can't be that there are many

men of your size and strength in New York. I gave the man who struck me cause. Tell me, was it you that knocked me down, and then generously brought me home?"

The stranger was a young man of perhaps thirty years. His beard was a tawny auburn, while his hair was of a chestnut color. He was rather good-looking, but his face was weather-beaten from much exposure. His blue eyes had a kindly look in them, and he did not appear to be a person that would knock a man down for a slight cause. At first sight he did not appear the equal in size to the man lying upon the sofa; but, on closer examination, one would say he was the stronger of the two. His deep chest, measuring at least fifty inches, and his large neck, set upon muscular shoulders, showed him capable of exerting immense strength. His whole form was beautifully symmetrical, and he had the advantage of fifteen years in point of age over his assailant, who was now pondering over these things while waiting for the stranger to answer.

"And are these the thanks I get for bringing you home on a night like this, when I found you dying in the mud? Couldn't I have got rid of the job by merely calling the police and letting them take care of you? What object could I have in knocking you down, and then going to all the trouble and expense of bringing you here?"

"Yes, papa," said the daughter, "how could you be so foolish as to hint such a thing to this kind gentleman, who has done so much for you? Poor, dear papa, his head is confused, and he knows not what he says."

"Yes, I do, my child," said the father. "My senses are becoming clearer every minute, and there are circumstances connected with the events of this night that make me think a brave and generous man might punish me first, and then, in the goodness of his heart, assist me."

"Oh, papa, papa!" exclaimed the girl, "your mind is out of order. How could any one who knocked you down be called generous? How could you aggrieve him of a dark night in the street? No, papa, blame the robbers, and no one else."

Meanwhile the younger man stood, with his arms folded, leaning against the mantelpiece, his right foot thrown over his left, showing to fine advantage his muscular limbs.

"I hope, sir," said the girl, going up to the young man in an imploring manner, "that you will not take offense at anything my

father may say, for he is suffering and is not himself. He will, I am sure, make you the most humble apology for his unjust suspicions."

"I shall take no offense, young lady, at anything your father says. A man who has never before met his equal in a hand-to-hand encounter naturally feels sore at meeting one who has defeated him. A stray shot in a battle between two ships often gives the victory; hence it doesn't follow that the man who knocked your father down could do it in a fair stand-up fight." He looked smilingly at the man on the sofa as he spoke.

"But, sir," said the other, "excuse me; you have not yet answered my question. I owe you my life, and perhaps more. There are extenuating circumstances that would free the man who knocked me down from any blame; and hence I ask you again, as a gentleman, did you do it?—for only such muscles as yours could strike such a blow."

"Are you determined," said the stranger, "that I shall answer you?"

"Yes," he replied, "for my own peace of mind. I can not sleep until I know whether it was you that punished me."

"Well, then," said the stranger, "if you will have it: I am the man."

"I knew it," said the other, "and I thank you for your kindness to me."

"Kindness!" cried the young girl, approaching the stranger with flashing eyes. "You cowardly wretch! Do you dare acknowledge that you knocked my poor father down? I take back all the good thoughts I had of you."

"Hold, young lady," said the stranger; "wait till you hear my story. I did it in self-defense, to save my own life. Your father was the aggressor."

"I don't believe it," replied the girl, and she burst into tears, for something told her it was true that her father was in fault.

"Yes, Flossy," said the father, "what the gentleman says is true, and he might have handed me over to the police—"

"Which I had not the slightest intention of doing. I saw into the case at once—that it was desperation for your family suffering from want."

But Flossy's tears still flowed, and she would not be comforted. "Oh," she cried, "you cruel man! why did you strike him so hard?"

"Indeed, Miss Flossy," said the young man, "I thought I struck very easy. I could not regulate my strength, he was so sudden."

"Don't call me Miss Flossy," cried the young woman, stamping her foot. "I am only Flossy to those I love; and I hate you for beating my poor father. I don't care what he did to you—I shall always hate you."

"Then," said the stranger, "I am no longer of any use here, where I hoped to bring happiness, since I find my reward only in being hated. Here, sir, is your pistol, which I picked up from the ground," and he laid a handsome silver-mounted weapon on the table.

The robber started when he recognized the pistol, and he hung down his head with shame.

His daughter's quick eye divined his feelings. "Why, papa," she said, "that's one of your dueling-pistols. What were you doing with it out to-night?" and she looked searchingly into his eyes.

Flossy's father could not endure her inquiring looks, and he jumped from the sofa and walked excitedly across the room. "You might have saved me, sir, this final mortification, and have been generous to the last. My daughter will despise me now."

"I could not retain your property," said the stranger; "but it seems I have done more harm than good to-night. And now, Mr. Edgar Brice, I must wish you good-night, and if you want any assistance from me, leave your name on a card at the restaurant, corner of Leonard Street and Broadway, and I will come to you."

As the stranger spoke these words, the girl gave a shriek and the father turned pale. The latter rushed to the door and put his back against it, holding a heavy iron bar in a menacing attitude.

"You either know too much of me," he said, "or you don't know enough. How did you become possessed of my name? Are you here to capture me as a fugitive from justice? You and I shall not part so easily as you think. We shall see who is the strongest when we stand fairly face to face."

The stranger looked coolly at him, and said, "Has it not struck you that if I had any designs upon you I could have carried them out after you had pointed a pistol at my head, and lay helpless at my feet? I had only to call the watch, and you would have gone to jail. Instead of doing this, I brought you home to your daughter."

"But," said the other, "how do I know you have not some hid-

den motive concealed under your apparent kindness? Before you leave here I must have some security that you mean me no harm."

The stranger put his hand in his breast-pocket and drew out a pistol, and with the other hand produced a wicked-looking dirk-knife with a blade a foot long.

"See!" said he, sternly; "what is your iron bar against these? I could kill you in a moment; and"—taking a silver shield from his pocket—"I have but to raise that window and whistle to have the police come to my aid."

The elder man was quite appalled at his coolness, and lowered the iron bar. The stranger took it in his hands and twisted it into such a shape that it was no longer available to bar the door or use as a weapon.

Brice, as we must now call him, sat down on the sofa, and, putting his hands over his face, exclaimed, "I am in your power; do with me as you please. You have the strength of the devil, and it's useless to contend with you. I put your life in peril; take mine if you think proper."

"The proof that I do not want to harm you," said the young man, "is that you are safe in your own home. The proof that I desire to help you is that I remain in your house after your rather rude treatment. I will leave the matter to your daughter, although she did tell me a few moments ago that she hated me."

"Yes," said the girl, "but that was before I knew dear papa pointed a pistol at you in the Park; and now papa will, I am sure, make you an apology."

"I will go on my knees to him, Flossy," said her father, "if he will only give me his forgiveness and friendship."

"There's my hand," said the stranger, "and you will find it a good one to lean on. And now, sir, let us sit down quietly and discuss your case. Let me look into your affairs and see what can be done to help you."

"In the first place," said Brice, "tell me your name, and please inform me how you discovered mine."

"My name," said the young man, "is Robert le Diable, and my home is on the street. I am to be found there all day long; but a card left for R. D. at the restaurant I mentioned will always find me. I found your name, or the name you own to be yours, written on your pocket-book when I was trying to find your street and number by looking through it."

"I did own to the name once," replied Brice, "but I shall go under another name hereafter."

"I hope," said his daughter, "you will pick out a pretty one. I should so like to be called Flossy Carrolton, after aunt."

"So be it," said Brice; "you are Flossy Carrolton from to-day, and don't forget it. Brice is dead, and here goes the pocket-book into the fire."

"My good friend," said Flossy to Robert le Diable, "hadn't you better change *your* name? I could never call you by that ugly word *Diable*, for you know I understand French."

"Then call me Mr. Robert; that's the name I go by."

"Don't feel hurt," said Flossy, "for you are too good-looking to have such an ugly name. Call yourself Robert Glendoline—that would suit you so well."

Flossy was but a child, although a woman in years, and, the effects of her late excitement having worn off, she was once more the lively little kitten that soothed her father's sad and lonely hours.

"Now, Flossy," said her father, "go to bed. I want to talk with this gentleman, and don't want you here." Whereupon Flossy, kissing him affectionately, and dropping a courtesy to Mr. Robert, disappeared into the adjoining room.

During all the excitement of the last hour Flossy, though caught in *deshabille*, did not fail to keep her person properly covered. Only once did she drop the shawl from her beautiful shoulders, which she might have been proud to exhibit, so beautiful were they; and so guileless was she that she had appeared without her stockings before the stranger.

When Flossy had retired, Brice said to Robert, "Now, that we are alone, I will unbosom myself to you. I can not appear in a worse light to you than I do at present, after an attempt to rob you, and then, after your generous behavior, threatening you with an iron bar. Good heavens! only to think: if you had been in the humor to do so, you might have twisted that bar around my neck and then turned me over to the police. I am a gentleman, Mr. Robert, and if I have been temporarily brutalized it is because I have been driven almost to despair by the sight of my dear child suffering for the simple necessities of life, when, until the past year, she had never wanted for anything. When I went out to-night it was for the purpose of pawning my pistol to get food for to-morrow. Everything else that was available had long since been disposed of. As I entered the Park, the devil tempted me, and you know the re-

sult. I was well punished for my folly. I have been three weeks in this city, and have been unable to obtain employment. I have no friends here, and people don't often pick one up in the street as you have done. I left England with a bad stain upon me, and the broad Atlantic did not wash it off, notwithstanding we were forty days on the passage. The trouble with me was this: I was chief clerk in a bank, and took a hundred pounds to meet a pressing difficulty, expecting to return the money at the end of the month. Unfortunately, I was detected before I could replace it. The laws of England are very severe, and do not discriminate between a large and a small offense. I knew that I should be prosecuted if I remained in England; so I secretly departed at night with Flossy in the mail-coach for Liverpool. There I found a ship on the point of sailing for New York. I arrived here with only forty pounds in my pocket. Flossy does not know why we left England. She was delighted with the change, and never asks questions. I hired these two bedrooms and a sitting-room for twenty dollars a month, and have hitherto had my meals sent to me from a caterer's; but my credit ended when my purse was empty.

"Now you know all, sir. I am by nature a gentleman, and my instincts are honorable, but I have not sufficient character to bear adversity like a man. If I can get employment, I shall do well; if I don't, I shall have to cut my throat and leave poor Flossy to the charity of the world. Her mother died ten years ago, and she has no one but me to look to."

"Your case is by no means desperate," said Robert. "Every day we hear of instances of men driven to crime for the want of a little assistance, while wealthy scoundrels that have ground the faces of the poor and robbed widows and orphans, go scot-free. You are a saint compared to such as they. Now, I'll tell you what I'll do: I will start you with a salary of two hundred dollars a month—you to be my coadjutor in a business that will pay well. If you suit, I will do better for you."

"Your offer," said Brice, "is beyond my fondest expectations. The salary you mention is more than I have had for years, since I took to horse-racing, which swallowed up all my property."

"Of course," said Robert, "you are an accountant, and can keep books?"

"Yes," replied Brice, "that was my business."

"Then," said the other, "the matter is settled. But you will have to work for me somewhat blindly, and ask no questions."

"I agree to anything," said Brice, "that will bring me in twenty-four hundred dollars a year."

"I will procure you another set of apartments," said Robert, "and I will advance you two hundred dollars to fit yourself out in a quiet way, so that the people of the house where you are going will have proper respect for you. Everything in New York depends on first appearances; even new trunks have a great effect. Should you require more money, I will let you have it. I will have the rooms fitted in a manner that I am sure will be agreeable to your daughter."

"My God, sir!" said Brice, "how can I place myself under such obligations to a stranger, who may be, for what I know, leading me to destruction? I must have a better understanding of what you intend before I go further in this business."

"Just as you please," said Robert. "I couldn't well lead you into worse scrapes than you got yourself into. But as I see I have to deal with a man who doesn't appreciate the magnanimity I have displayed toward him, I will take my leave—wishing you good-night," and he moved toward the door.

"For heaven's sake, don't leave me!" said Brice. "I am a fool and a churl. I will serve you to the best of my ability, with no more doubts or fears. You will never hear an objection from me again, no matter what you tell me to do."

"Well and good," said Robert. "Now I must bid you good-night; my people are waiting for me, and they will think I have been kidnapped." So, placing the money on the table and shaking Brice's hand, he departed.

The Englishman pondered long and deeply over the events of the night. He did not know whether to consider himself a lucky man in encountering such good fortune, or a fool to embark in an enterprise about which he knew absolutely nothing.

"But," said he to himself, "I can't starve, and he can deliver me over to the police whenever he pleases. He can ruin me if he likes. Yet I think I have one hold on him: he couldn't keep his eyes off Flossy, and their acquaintanceship will soon ripen into love. With a son-in-law like that by my side, I could walk over all New York; and if his purse is as well lined as it seems to-night, I can never want for a bottle of brandy."

With that he helped himself to a glass of the fiery liquid, and retired to bed.



## CHAPTER X.

## ROBERT LE DIABLE'S HOME.

It was after midnight when Robert le Diable again found himself in the street. It was still dark and rainy, and his heavy clothes were soaked with moisture.

But he seemed to care nothing for the weather, and strode on as rapidly and easily as when he commenced his wafer-sticking rounds in the morning.

He passed along William Street to John Street, and thence up to Broadway, which he kept until he came to Broome Street. Here he turned to the right, and, going about six blocks, he passed, where the buildings were very sparse, up a dark alley, and stopped before a door in a brick wall inclosing the back-yard of a house. He placed his finger on a concealed spring, and the door flew silently open. As he did so, the whine of an animal could be heard on the rear porch, as if its acute instincts heralded a visitor.

Robert le Diable placed his finger on a portion of the wall of the house that was covered with wood. A narrow door opened to admit him, and closed behind him. Another whine of the animal showed that this also had been noticed.

In another moment he entered a room entirely paneled with walnut wood. Candles were on the table, and a wood-fire was burning brightly on the hearth.

Robert le Diable flung himself into an arm-chair before the fire. "This is comfortable!" he exclaimed. "How long will it last?"

After drinking a glass of wine from a bottle that stood upon the table, he touched a knob on the wall, and the sound of a cuckoo-clock echoed through the house. There was the sound of a door shutting, then steps could be heard approaching. The door of the room opened, and a lovely girl stood there, her eyes beaming with pleasure.

"Come in, Myra," said Robert le Diable. "I am here at last—only an hour later than three weeks ago I said that I would be."

The girl approached in a crouching attitude, as an Eastern slave would do, and, kneeling at his side, kissed his hand respectfully; then, looking up into his face, which was smiling fondly upon her, she said, "I am so glad you have come. Time has passed so

dearly without you, and you are so regular in returning that, when your hour came and I didn't hear the cuckoo-clock, I became very uneasy. Even Aysha missed you, and has been whining ever since eleven o'clock."

Robert le Diable looked at the beautiful girl kneeling before him, seemingly with great affection. He raised her to her feet, and said, "Don't kneel to me, child ; that is an observance due only to God."

He put his arm around her, and, drawing her toward him, seemed about to kiss her.

The girl's form quivered as she held her face up expectantly. She closed her eyes, and her rich, ripe lips trembled with emotion. Robert started back. "No, child," he said, "your lips should not be pressed by mine when you are betrothed to another." He then kissed her softly on the forehead, and walked toward the fire.

The girl stood where he had left her, with her head bowed in deep humility and her beautiful hands crossed upon her breast. Suddenly she raised her head, and, extending her arms beseechingly, she approached him, and, kneeling at his feet, clasped his hand with her trembling fingers. "Oh, do not doom me to this !" she said. "Though Walter is all that any one could honor and respect, I have no love for him, such as a woman should have for the man she is to marry. Don't send me from you ; let me stay here, where I am happy. I can never know anywhere else such kindness, as you have extended to me ; and Walter would not wish to unite himself to one who can not love him, no matter how much she may like and respect him. We can never be anything but brother and sister."

"Why, Myra," said Robert, "you astonish me ! I thought this matter was settled months ago."

"Ah !" said she, "I didn't know my own heart then, and I partly promised you to marry Walter ; but I find that love won't come at any one's beck and call. Love is perpetual joy—not such pain as you would fasten upon me by marrying me to Walter. I would scorn a throne if I had to share it with one whom I could not love. One hour of joy is worth to me more than the wealth of the Indies !"

"You romantic little puss !" said Robert, affectionately, while a tear stood in his eye. "This is what I get for sending you to a fashionable boarding-school, where you have been reading novels

and neglecting the more solid branches of education. Rise from your knees, child ; you unman me."

"I will not rise," she said, "until you promise not to send me away from you." She spoke so beseechingly that he could do no less than promise something in order to console her.

He lifted her up, and said, "Well, Myra, we will not talk about it to-night. I won't mar the pleasure of my return by any selfish conduct, and you shall never do anything you do not want to. Poor Walter, though, will feel this dreadfully."

"Oh, no," she answered, "he seldom mentions the subject to me, and I think has only acquiesced to please you, and repay some of the many obligations he is under."

"Ah, Myra !" said Robert, "you little know what exquisite beauty is yours, and what a loss it would be to any man that had set his heart upon you not to obtain your hand."

Myra's beauty was such that one could gaze upon it by the hour. She was in her nineteenth year, of medium height, and so perfect in face and form that, to try and improve either, would be like painting the lily or gilding refined gold. Her eyes were large and of a hazel color, and her dark, auburn hair hung in rich plaits down her shoulders.

Her costume was somewhat Oriental. On her head was a crimson fez trimmed with a blue silk tassel, such as are worn in Turkish harems. Her bodice was of blue silk over a rich lace vest, and her skirt of fine muslin, the lower edge embroidered with silken flowers. Her little feet were incased in blue silk slippers, with gold bows upon the instep ; and her arms, half-bare, were ornamented with rich bangles, the gifts of Robert le Diable on her several birthdays.

"Mr. Robert," said Myra, "you take, then, no account of me, and you think less of Walter's happiness than you should. Think what a fate would be his to find himself united to one who could not possibly love him, and who would be obliged to pass her life in perpetual sorrow. Oh, think of me, wandering through life without an aim ! Oh, no, do not doom me to such a fate ! I will die to serve you and do your bidding. Do you think I can ever forget the cold, pitiless night, six years ago, when you picked me up in the street, where, for the first time in my life, I went to beg something to keep life in my poor dying mother ? Can I forget how you wrapped your cloak around my shivering form and went to my poor mother's bedside, who had died in my absence, and how you

consoled and comforted the poor orphan in the hour of her bereavement? Ah!" she continued, "I never shall forget the ecstasy I felt when you brought me to this comfortable home, and then brought good Mrs. Reed to lead me in the way of truth and to practice the precepts of my dear mother. Can I forget how you provided me with teachers to instruct me in all that a good woman should know? Yet now, when I am of an age to apply the knowledge I have acquired, you wish to turn me over to some one who will find neither joy nor poetry in me, but merely a deep well of tears. Ah, no, Mr. Robert, you will not do that! Let me stay with you a while longer, and in your hours of weariness try to drive away the sorrows which I imagine I sometimes see weighing you down. Let me sing to you, prattle to you in French, your favorite language. You have given me much to be thankful for; let me return in a small way your favors. Now, you will, won't you?" and she put her hands on his shoulders and looked up into his face imploringly.

Robert could not help clasping the beautiful girl in his arms and kissing her passionately. She laid her beautiful head upon his breast, as if that were the haven she sought and where she would like to linger forever.

At length he unclasped her hands and raised her head from his breast, and seated her upon a chair by his side. He was overcome with emotion, while Myra's face shone bright with rapture as her passionate eyes expressed the happiness of her soul.

"Myra, my child," said Robert le Diable, "my life is a precarious one. Events may occur at a moment's notice that will separate me from you forever. Under the circumstances, I thought it my duty to provide a protector for you. You are unfit to battle with the world, and Walter was my choice. I shall never force you to do anything against your will; but, in case anything should happen to me to prevent my return to you, let me show you the provision I have made for your support."

He pressed a spring, and one of the panels in the wall moved aside, disclosing a small closet.

"In this closet," he said, "are twenty-five thousand dollars in money, and some jewelry to remember me by."

"As if I should want anything to remember you by!" exclaimed Myra, sobbing. "Oh, don't talk so sadly; you will break my heart!" Then, brightening up, she exclaimed, "If they took you to the end of the world I should find you! I will never leave you."

"Well," said Robert, "remember this secret deposit of money in case you need it for any purpose. And now, Myra, get me a cup of tea, for I am tired and want some refreshment."

Myra went quickly out into a small and handsomely furnished dining-room, and soon returned with the announcement that tea was on the table. Taking his hand, she led him out to supper.

Everything on the tea-table was in good taste, and Myra, with a smiling countenance, presided at the urn; for her heart was made happy by the promise she had received that she need do nothing contrary to her wishes.

She knew too little of the world, and of the accidents to which men are liable, to let Robert's obscure hints worry her. She had always had her own way, and felt that now she had a promise that she was not to leave her benefactor, which was all she had to ask for in life.

The tea passed very cheerfully, Robert listening to Myra's pleasant voice relating the occurrences that had taken place during his three weeks' absence.

"Now," said Robert, "let me see Aysha; for if she does not see me, she will whine all night. I can hear her now."

Myra went out of the room, and soon reappeared, leading a small lioness by a chain. The animal crawled up to her master, and looked into his face affectionately. Robert patted her head, and she licked his hand, then lay down at his feet, closing her eyes as if supremely happy.

"She loves you so much!" said Myra.

"She ought to," said Robert. "I rescued her from slavery and death. There's an interesting story connected with this lioness, and I'll tell you about it to-morrow. You are now of an age when you should know my history, that you may understand my anxiety about your future welfare."

Myra placed her hand upon his lips. "No more of that to-night," said she. "I am happy now—do not disturb my joy." And they talked of other things.

Robert le Diable presently consulted his watch, and, finding it past two o'clock, exclaimed, "It's time for us all to be in bed. Myra, you will lose all the roses from your cheeks, and I shall be fit for nothing to-morrow." Taking up a candle, he kissed the girl on the forehead, patted Aysha on the head, and went up-stairs.

Myra led the lioness out by her chain and fastened her to her cage on the back porch. Then she sought her chamber—a pretty

little room, simply furnished, looking like the abode of innocence and peace. Myra knelt in prayer, thanking God for his mercies and for the happiness which filled her breast, and then slept the sleep of innocence, without a disturbing care upon her mind.

When Robert le Diable reached his chamber, he placed the candle on the mantel and sat down to think. What a whirl his mind had been in since six o'clock that morning, when he started on his mission of distributing wafers !

But what did it all mean ? In what could this man be engaged that required so much mystery—he who seemed to be surrounded with luxury and able to dispense money with prodigality, yet who entered his own house by intricate windings, as if he did not wish to be seen ?

Men who have nothing to conceal from the public do not act in this way. Yet there was nothing about the premises that indicated the owner to be anything not respectable and upright.

Robert's chamber was a model of comfort and elegance. To look at him in his suit of coarse, gray cloth, one would suppose him to be free from luxurious tastes ; but such was not the case.

In all about him he saw the hand of Myra, who thought nothing good enough for him, and lavished the money he gave her upon his bedroom, and in improving the comforts of his house. His dressing-table was covered with specimens of Myra's handiwork in silk embroidery. She had selected the furniture—a set of mahogany, beautifully carved by an artist hand. There were two large arm-chairs, a lounge upholstered in blue damask, and a book-case containing a selection of choice volumes. He loved to look at all these things, as he loved also to see Myra dressed in her Oriental costume.

In this retreat he breathed the air of freedom and rest from the cares which beset him in the city, and he would have liked to spend here the remainder of his life.

This had been Robert's home for five years ; but during that time no stranger had entered its doors. He seemed to come to it as a resting-place when tired of the outside world.

Here he could forget for a while the mercenary conflict which raged without, the everlasting greed for money which he saw depicted on the faces of the covetous wretches that rushed about like ghouls, sucking the life-blood from the hearts of those who had not the ability to hold their own in the struggle for existence. Here

there was no backbiting, no abuse of friends ; all was peace and happiness.

But, heavens ! what a revelation had this night made to him ! He was too much a man of the world not to be able to read the heart of that innocent girl, whom he looked upon almost as his own child, and on whom he had showered benefits without an idea that her gratitude would culminate in love. He could not be mistaken, though the knowledge came upon him like a thunderbolt and disarranged all his cherished plans. He had given Myra to one for whom he had a strong affection—a noble heart that would beat for her as long as life lasted ; yet how could he sacrifice this dear child to carry out his own plans, when he knew that every fiber of her being quivered with love for himself ? So far he had never thought of love ; his life had been too busy to become entangled in the softer passions, although his heart was as big as the ocean so far as love for his kind extended. He had often thought that if he ever did lose his heart it would be with one who resembled Myra, though he had never dreamed of *her*. She was to him always a child—the little waif he had picked up in the street that rainy night, and whom he had brought to his home out of pure charity.

He had never fully realized until to-night how beautiful Myra was. Like a bud that one puts into a vase at night and finds unfolded in the morning, so had Myra sprung from girlhood to womanhood, with all a lovely woman's grace and cultivation, but losing none of those girlish ways that generally depart from the female sex after the age of twenty—ways that add immeasurably to the charms of a woman.

Robert had never once reflected that the time would come when Myra's heart would swell with passion's throb or love's fond sigh, nor did he ever stop to consider whether her heart would open to receive the tender libations of love. He had thought to secure what he had supposed would be her happiness in his own way, and without consulting her disposition, for he considered Walter one whom any woman would delight to marry.

Now he awoke to the fact that a man knows but little of the heart of a young and beautiful woman. He was now perfectly aware that Myra loved but him, the rough, hardy man with weather-beaten face.

The conceit of Myra being in love with him rather pleased Robert, while it made him anxious for the young girl's future. He was under thirty years of age, it is true, but the battles he had

fought in his struggle through life made him look older, and he could not imagine how one so young and beautiful could let her heart go out to him. Nevertheless, he felt that she loved him with a love that would never change.

"A short time since," said he to himself, "I could have plucked this rose and worn it near my heart without a fear that there would be a single thorn on the stem to sting me ; but it is now too late. The die is cast, and all I can do is to refrain from giving pain to the heart that loves me. I will so conduct myself toward her that she will learn in time to look upon me simply as a friend." But he forgot the kisses he had received from her trembling lips, and the sigh of happiness that she breathed as he clasped her in his arms. Yet now and then would occur the sweet ecstasy of those moments, and he wished he had known her feelings when last he left her.

Robert retired to rest with many conflicting feelings, and, although he had been upon his feet nearly all that day, he did not close his eyes until near daybreak next morning. It seemed to him that he had hardly slept at all when the breakfast-bell awoke him, but, looking at his watch, he found it was nine o'clock.

When Robert went down to the parlor, Myra, who was playing the piano, jumped up and ran toward him ; but he merely lifted her hand to his lips and kissed it respectfully.

"Thus, Myra," said he, "the ladies of the house in olden times were saluted, and, as you are no longer a child, I must treat you as a woman. It only struck me last night how you had bloomed into maturity and beauty, and your sex is entitled to all the deference we can pay it."

Myra looked disappointed, and her eyes filled with tears, for he had never before omitted kissing her affectionately on the forehead.

"If I am to lose your affection," she said, "because I am a woman in stature while my heart is still that of a child, I am sorry ever to be a woman."

"Sit down, child, and play for me. While I live you will always possess my warmest affection, and no other shall take your place." His heart smote him as he made this last remark.

Myra played for him all his favorite tunes, although her heart felt sad. She could not forget his warm caresses of the day before, and colder ones seemed a mockery to her now. She wondered if he would ever give her a warm embrace again.



Myra did not know that she loved Robert as a lover, but she felt that he was more to her than all the world beside, and that any change in his affection would be like the hand of death laid upon her.

A knock on the door announced that breakfast was ready ; and Myra, taking Robert by the hand as usual, led him to the table.

He smilingly offered his arm, saying, " My princess must be treated with all courtesy." But she would not take it, and retained his hand. When they reached the breakfast-room he saw that her eyes were filled with tears.

" Ah !" said he to himself, " I have a difficult part to play, but this poor child must not be made to suffer." He did his best to cheer her up with the promise that she should see more of him in the future, and talked of the happy days they would pass together.

In the breakfast-room an elderly lady was seated by the fire, who rose as Robert entered and courtesied respectfully. He extended his hand, saying, " How do you do, Mrs. Reed ? I am so glad to see you !" She pressed the offered hand in the most respectful manner. This man seemed to command the love and respect of all about him, as if he were a superior being.

Mrs. Reed was the lady that Robert had selected to preside over his house and watch over Myra in his absence. Her husband had been accidentally killed, and she left penniless, without a friend in the world. Robert had given her a helping hand ; and, when Myra came, he introduced Mrs. Reed into the house, where she acted a mother's part toward the young girl.

" I can not tell you how glad I am to see you, Mr. Robert," said Mrs. Reed. " The days pass dully when you are away. I don't know what we should do but for Myra and her piano."

" Well, sit down and pour out the tea, Mrs. Reed," said Robert, " and Myra shall sit by me." This drove away the clouds resting on the girl's brow, and breakfast passed merrily.

Mrs. Reed was known in the neighborhood as the lady to whom the house belonged. All bills were contracted and paid by her, and everything went through her hands. When Myra walked abroad, she accompanied her. No one knew that a man ever entered the house, for Robert le Diable always went and came by night. Mrs. Reed never cared to inquire into the mystery. She only knew that Mr. Robert chose to have it so, and that was enough for her. His word was law. So they had lived for the last five years.

If any one had suggested to Mrs. Reed that Myra and her bene-

factor would fall in love with each other, she would have thought the idea preposterous.

Mrs. Reed always took the head of the table at meals ; but, being elderly and delicate, Robert did not exact that she should sit up for him when he returned home at night. Eleven was his hour, and Myra waited for him and gave him his tea.

There were three other members of the household, including a cook who was deaf, who had never been up-stairs, and didn't know that such a person as Robert le Diable was in existence. Mrs. Reed made up her own room and that of Mr. Robert, and Myra attended to hers.

Breakfast over, Robert and Myra returned to the parlor, where the sound of the piano was soon heard, and Myra's sweet voice singing some of the simple lays that her benefactor loved so well.

As Myra sang, Robert seemed lost in deep meditation. Finally Myra stopped playing, and said, "You are tired, Mr. Robert."

"No, child ; I could listen to you forever. Your music carries me back to by-gone years, when my mother used to sing to me. But come here and sit by me, for I have much to say to you."

Myra took a footstool and seated herself at his feet.

"Myra," said he, "I am going to stay at home all day ; and, to amuse you, I will tell you the story of my life, which has been an eventful one. When you hear my story you will wonder that I am still alive and possess these muscles of steel—which alone have enabled me to go through hardships enough to have killed any ordinary man."

"Oh," said Myra, "I so long to hear the history of your life !" and, lifting her eyes to his, she placed herself in a listening attitude.

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## CHAPTER XI.

### ROBERT LE DIABLE'S STORY OF HIS LIFE.

"I HAVE never known a mother's love, Myra, since I was six or seven years of age. I don't know who my mother was, or what was her name. I do not even know within a year or two how old I am ; but, as near as I can conjecture, I am about twenty-eight years of age.

"I can remember my mother's face as if I had seen it but yesterday. I shall never forget her, although time and grief must have made a great change in her if she is still living. I have no hope of ever seeing her again, for I have not the least idea of her name or place of residence.

"I can see in my mind's eye her sweet face and mild glance as she bent over my bed at night after hearing me say my prayers, when she would kiss me and bid me go to sleep. That memory haunts me continually. I never close my eyes at night without seeing my mother's beautiful face bending over me. I shall carry that vision with me to the grave. I remember a little boy that played with me. He was, as near as I can recollect, about my own age ; but his face has gone from my memory. I remember, too, an old man who was kind to me and on whose knee I used to sit, listening to his stories. His features faded year by year from my memory like a dream, while the recollection of my mother seems to grow stronger as I grow older.

"They say that the incidents of early youth are more strongly impressed on the mind than those that occur later in life ; but this I hardly believe. The events of youth sometimes come back strongly impressed upon the mind, but they come rather as dreams than as realities.

"I don't know how, or when, or why I left my fond mother. I only remember being at sea in a large ship and that the weather was very stormy. I was sick for many days. Then I saw strange faces around my bed on shore, and I cried for my mother. That night she came to me in my dreams and comforted me. She leaned over me and told me always to say my prayers when I went to bed, which I always did for years. Then came a change. I was in the hands of a task-master who was teaching me to walk the tight-rope.

"It was not a difficult matter, for the rope was placed so near the ground that I had not far to fall should I make a misstep. There were four other little boys under instruction, and there was great emulation among us ; but after a while it got to be irksome, and our task-master would flog us if we didn't perform to suit him. We had to learn to twist our limbs until it seemed that we had no joints, and by the time I was nine or ten years old I could distort my body so that it looked like nothing human.

"Gradually our tight-rope was raised until it was thirty feet above the ground, and we boys were required to run quickly along

it with a balancing-pole in our hands, then to run without the pole, and finally to wheel a small barrow over the rope. If we failed, we were sent to bed without our supper or whipped.

"When I had been about three years under instruction, I was taken to a circus and introduced to the manager, who, as they expressed it, 'put me through my paces.' I was made to perform before him on the tight and slack ropes, turn somersaults from a spring-board, haul myself up a rope 'hand over hand,' as the sailors call it, stand up straight with a small boy on my shoulders, etc. My performance elicited much applause from the manager, who praised my sturdy appearance and pronounced my physique perfect. The manager then made me run around the circus-ring to see what endurance I had, and I kept on until I was nearly exhausted.

"My four companions were put through the same paces as myself; but they could in no way compare with me, and the manager said they required further training.

"Then, after much higgling, a bargain was concluded between my task-master and the manager, and I was sold to the circus-man for five hundred dollars.

"When I found I was to be separated from the four little boys who had been my partners in affliction and my companions in play, I burst into tears. Although I remembered the harshness of my task-master, I was unwilling to leave the boys, for whom I had formed a strong attachment, for we had shared all our joys and sorrows together.

"I was now to be torn away from these little friends and transferred to strangers, who might treat me even worse than my task-master had done.

"When I cried, the wretch said to the manager, 'Oh, he is so fond of me! That's my fault; I am so easy with my boys that they don't learn as fast as they would with a harsh master. Besides, I feed 'em too high; they get too fat.' He all the time knew in his heart that we were almost starved.

"'Well,' said the manager, 'he will have to do his work here; we keep no cats that don't catch mice. I can't afford to pay five hundred dollars for a boy that don't do his work well. Those that won't tumble as we wants 'em, we makes 'em do it. Stop crying, boy, or I'll wallop you!' This, thought I, is worse than before; but I checked my tears and looked as calm as I could.

"'What's this boy's name?' said the manager.

“ ‘I don’t know,’ said the task-master, ‘but the boys calls him Robert le Diable.’

“ ‘Well,’ said the manager, ‘that’s a first-rate name for him.’ So from that day to this I have gone by that name, although I have several others for occasion.

“ ‘Where did you get the boy?’ said the manager.

“ ‘I found him adrift across the water,’ said the other; ‘no one owns him.’

“ ‘You know I must register him,’ said the manager, ‘for the authorities in some places are mighty particular in knowing all about children, and I’m rather particular myself.’

“ ‘All stuff,’ said the task-master; ‘you have been very particular about those I’ve sold you, hain’t you?’

“ ‘Has he any clothes,’ asked the manager, ‘besides those he has on?’

“ ‘Clothes!’ said the other. ‘What’s the use of giving clothes to a child that’s performing all the time? They would cost a fortune. I always make ’em exercise without any clothes. He’s had one new suit and a pair of shoes since he came to me. By going barefoot most of the time he can hold on with his feet the same as a man can do with his hands.’

“ ‘Now, boys,’ said the manager, ‘come round to-night and see the youngster perform. I intend he shall open on the saw-dust as Robert le Diable.’

“That night the circus-tent was beautifully lighted, and all the boys in town thronged around it to read the advertisement concerning my appearance, and to speculate upon my capabilities.

“The lighted tent brought to my mind the dim remembrance of something of the same kind I had seen before; and when the horses began to go round the ring, then I knew I had seen it all somewhere. This memory affected me all the evening, but I managed to go through with my appointed tasks creditably, and elicited thunders of applause.

“ ‘I performed one trick not in the bills that brought the house down. After turning a back somersault, I took my feet in my hands and, turning myself into a hoop, rolled around the ring. In my flesh-colored tights and gold spangles I looked like a fire-ball going over the saw-dust. To make the affair more interesting, my four companions, who were present and knew the trick as well as I did, jumped into the ring, turned into hoops, and followed after me, and such an excitement was never before wit-

nessed in that circus-tent. My reputation was established, and from that night Robert le Diable became the chief attraction of the circus.

"I should have mentioned that I still retained in my kit or bag the suit of clothes I wore on the day I was decoyed from home. They were of brown cloth, marked with the initials 'J. G.,' while my cloth cap was marked 'C. G.' I presume these must be the initials of my name, which were driven out of my memory by ill-treatment."

Myra's eyes had been filled with tears for a long time, and she now sobbed outright.

"If the narrative of my unhappy boyhood makes you shed tears, Myra," said Robert, "I don't know what you will do when you hear the sufferings of my early manhood."

Myra dried her tears as well as she could, and Robert proceeded with his story.

"I have that suit of clothes yet," said he, "and never intend to part with it. There was a tiny picture-book of 'Old Mother Hubbard and her Dog' in one of the pockets, marked in ink, 'From Grandpa.' I was so afraid my master would take this from me, that I cut open the lining of my coat and hid it. Perhaps by means of this book I shall yet find out who I am.

"I remained in the circus company until I was about sixteen years old, and had become a marvel in athletic exercises of all kinds. I was stronger, even at that age, than ordinary men, and no one ever exceeded me in activity.

"During the time I was with the circus it spent five years on the continent of Europe, where my exploits attracted great attention, and through me the manager made a good deal of money. The result of my travels was that I learned to speak the French, German, Spanish, and Italian languages, which I have never forgotten. All the education I received was picked up from my intercourse with the world, and, having a good memory, I never forgot what I read.

"Notwithstanding all the money I brought the manager, he treated me with great severity, as he did all others under his control. He once knocked me down when I slipped and failed to perform a double somersault. The blood gushed from my nose and ears, and I was carried off senseless. The audience hissed him and left the circus."

At this point Myra sobbed piteously.

"Reserve your tears, child, for worse things," said Robert, "or, if this recital pains you, I will stop."

"Oh, no," said Myra; "I must hear it to the end, if it kills me."

"Well," said Robert, "I was treated so badly that I determined to run away the first good opportunity that offered. About this time the company went to Marseilles. The brutal manager treated me worse than ever, though I performed feats that none of the others could approach, and did all in my power to please him. It was no use, for he seemed to hate the very sight of me.

"I went down to the mole one day, and there I saw a French brig moving out of the crowd of shipping. As I watched her movements, the captain, a bright young fellow, asked me if I didn't want to be a sailor. I said, 'Yes.' 'Then come with me,' said he, 'and see the world.' 'Wait half an hour until I can get my kit,' I said, 'and I will join you.' 'Oh,' said he, 'you will have plenty of time before we leave the basin, but hurry up.'

"I ran back to the circus-tent and got my bag, which was stored in a covered wagon, where I slept with five other youngsters. One of them was sick in the wagon, and saw me leaving with the bag. 'Where are you going, Diable?' said he, faintly. 'I'm going to sell my old clothes.' 'No,' said he, 'you are going away. God be with you; you'll never see me again.' I clasped his hot hand, bade him a hasty farewell, and left the accursed tent forever.

"I went on board the brig—it was called the *Gazelle*—and reported myself to the captain, and in half an hour we were standing out of the harbor under full sail.

"The next two years, Myra, were the happiest of my life. My woes were soon forgotten in the pleasures of the voyage. We passed through the Straits of Gibraltar and were soon on the great ocean; and, oh! how my heart swelled to think I was a free man and no longer subject to the caprice of a tyrant! Captain Duprey was a charming man, adored by his crew, for sailors become devoted to a kind man and will do anything to please him.

"I became a great favorite with the captain. He was wonderfully pleased with my agility, and astonished at the strength I displayed. Although probably not more than sixteen years old, I was five feet ten inches in height, with limbs like a young Hercules.

"In a month I could beat the smartest seaman in the ship in

getting out to the weather earing, and my performances in the rigging astonished all hands.

"At the Island of Madeira we laid in a cargo of wine for the East Indies, and remained a week at Funchal, enjoying ourselves to our heart's content. We then sailed for Rio de Janeiro, sold part of our cargo, took in sugar, and sailed for Calcutta, and thence proceeded to Canton.

"We spent a year trading in the East Indies, our voyage being a lucrative one. Finally we filled up with teas and silks and all the curiosities peculiar to that part of the world, and returned to Marseilles, where we arrived safely after an absence of eighteen months. Our voyage was so successful that the owners gave each of the crew, myself included, two months' extra wages.

"I spent six months longer on the vessel, during which time she made a voyage up the Mediterranean. On her return to Marseilles, having saved a considerable sum of money, I determined to visit Paris, which I had heard was the most beautiful city in the world. I had been there with the circus, but was never allowed to roam about. I determined then to see it as a man when I had the means of enjoying myself.

"I accordingly shipped on board a vessel bound for Havre, and thence took passage in the diligence for the capital, where I was set down at a third-class inn called 'La Fame,' where I settled myself to stay till my funds gave out.

"As I settled my bills regularly every week, I became a great favorite with Pierre Laroche, the landlord, a good old soul, whose kindness I shall never forget.

"I stayed at the inn three months, indulging myself in all the amusements of Paris. At first I thought there could be no end to my purse, but found the city an expensive place to live in, except for those who go there determined to practice rigid economy. When I found my money running low, I paid my landlord two weeks' board in advance, and determined, before that time should elapse, that I would find some employment.

"The two years on board the *Gazelle* had made a man of me. I was now six feet tall, with powerful muscles. I was not quite so large as I am now, but still able to manage almost any two men. I was a picture of ruddy health, the result of my sea life, joined to a vigorous constitution. I was full of animal spirits, and ready to enter into any venture that might turn up.

"While I was looking around for something to do, I saw a pla-



card in the Champs Élysées announcing the arrival in Paris of the celebrated circus of Monsieur Petard. While reading the announcement, I heard the sound of music, and, walking toward it, was told that the circus company was out on parade, and presently the head of the procession came in sight.

"First came a car, in the shape of a golden swan, drawn by eight powerful horses richly caparisoned, and containing a band of music of twenty pieces. Then came four other gorgeous cars, each drawn by four horses, and containing the circus-riders dressed in their elegant costumes. Forty men and women followed on variegated horses, and in the rear came ten trick-ponies, a cage of performing monkeys, and several huge dogs as large as bears.

"The sight of this procession stirred me, as the sound of a trumpet does an old war-horse. Hard as had been my circus life, I could not forget the triumphs I had achieved in the arena, and I trembled with excitement as I gazed at the pageant.

"What was my surprise to see, in the rear of the procession, a handsome carriage with a banner proclaiming in large letters that Robert le Diable was to exhibit in his wonderful performance on the tight-rope, lifting and throwing weights, and bareback riding.

"I had laid aside this name, thinking it an inconvenient one for a person residing in Paris, and had adopted that of Robert le Preux; but I was indignant when I saw the name by which I had gained celebrity stolen by another—although it showed my genius had been appreciated.

"The idea now struck me that I would expose the impostor. I had never omitted keeping up my exercises, and in calm weather, when the ship's crew had little to do, I helped them while away many a weary hour with my exhibitions. I would lift a barrel of beef and hold it high above my head. I would take two sixty-pound weights on my little fingers, and swing them around my head as if they were made of light wood, and would turn somersaults upon the hard deck and land upon my feet.

"When visiting foreign countries in the Gazelle, I would ride the wildest horses I could find without saddle or bridle, and, if a horse was unmanageable, it was only necessary to turn him over to me and I would soon bring him under subjection.

"In fact, I could do anything of this kind that any man in the world could do, for my strength and activity were unsurpassed.

"I found that the circus-tent was pitched near the Bois de Boulogne, and I immediately called on Monsieur Petard and in-

formed him that I was the original and only genuine Robert le Diable, offering to expose the pretender to that title, if he would let me appear in the ring that night after the *soi-disant* Robert had finished his performance; and that if M. Petard was not satisfied, after witnessing my performance, that I could beat any man in the world, I would pay him five hundred francs—although, in fact, I had hardly a centime left in my pocket.

“The manager agreed to my proposition, hoping either to win the money or to gain an important addition to his corps. The only trouble was to obtain a suit of performing-clothes that would fit my figure; but M. Petard promised to have all arranged by evening.

“That evening I went to the arena—a much grander affair in every way than the circus-tent in which I had been wont to appear. It was decorated with silk flags and banners, and was calculated to draw the people of Paris, who are taken only with grand exhibitions.

“The horses made their entry and went through with their performances in splendid style. The acrobats had gone to refresh themselves after their labors, when ‘Monsieur Vif, the original Robert le Diable,’ was announced by the clown, and the impostor entered, bowing and scraping to the audience as only a Frenchman can.

“Monsieur Vif was an athletic young fellow of thirty. He commenced by throwing about five small boys very much at the risk of their necks, spinning plates on the point of an umbrella, opening the latter while the plates were in motion, and a number of other sufficiently common feats. Then he lifted a sixty-pound weight, held it at arms’ length, and threw it across the circus; then he went through the trapeze performance, and, bowing and grimacing to the audience, turned to leave the arena, when he perceived me at his side.

“‘Ladies and gentlemen,’ said I, addressing the audience, at the same time laying my hand on Monsieur Vif’s shoulder, ‘this man is an impostor. I am the genuine Robert le Diable, as I will soon show you.’

“Monsieur Vif looked very indignant, but the audience shouted. They thought it part of the performance, especially when the clown sang out, ‘One centime on the big fellow.’

“Vif now realized that he was about to be exposed, and he said fiercely to me, ‘You are a liar! Take that,’ aiming, as he spoke, a

blow at my head. I caught him by the wrist, twisted his arm till it was nearly dislocated, and then pitched him into a net that was slung ten feet from the ground to catch children that fell from the tight-rope. 'Lie there,' said I, 'you miserable caricature of Robert le Diable !'

"The audience still thought this was part of the play, and shouted louder than ever. The manager was in ecstasies, and the clown scrutinized me with a lorgnette made of gingerbread.

"I now went to work in earnest, and I assure you I astonished the audience. I had four men on my shoulders at one time, and, with the assistance of another powerful fellow, formed a pyramid of seven. I then took a hundred-pound weight in each hand, raised them high above my head, and ran around the ring, the clown trying in vain to overtake me and shouting, 'That shows that Monsieur Vif is a liar ! If I catch him I will throw him into the net.'

"I performed that night some wonderful feats of strength, such as bending iron bars, pitching heavy weights, etc., which nearly set the audience crazy, and made the spectator in the net feel greatly dismayed.

"Then they brought me a wild horse, which no one had ever been able to ride, and which took four men to hold.

"'There, Mr. Robert le Diable,' said the clown, 'is your brother. If he doesn't eat you up, you can have my gingerbread.'

"I seized the bridle and looked the animal steadily in the eye, saying to the men, 'Let him go.' The horse reared and pulled back, snorting with temper ; but I brought his head down, and, giving a twist with my hand to the curb, I threw him on his side and planted my foot on his neck.

"'This is the devil, sure enough,' said the clown. 'Bring us a bottle of holy water.'

"The horse, having recovered from his astonishment, began to kick and struggle, and I lifted him, when he jumped at me with his mouth wide open. Giving the curb another twist, I threw him again ; but he was up directly, and struck at me with his right fore-foot. I caught his leg and held it, and, giving the curb a twist, flung him again. I had dealt with wild horses before, and had encountered worse cases than this.

"The animal now refused to get up ; so, taking a whip, I belabored him soundly. He rose in a perfect foam, and trembling all over ; but he held his head down and made no movement. Throwing the bridle over his neck, I jumped upon his back and

plied the whip until he flew around the track like mad. In twenty minutes from the time I took hold of the brute I had conquered him.

"I wound up by taking my feet in my hands and performing the hoop-trick ; and, after going twice around the ring, I rolled out into the back tent.

"The audience were so much delighted with my performance that they called me out. My success was assured, and, before I left that night, the manager secured my services at a salary of six hundred francs a month.

"I continued to delight Paris for several weeks, when the circus had to leave for the provinces. I had formed many acquaintances among the gentlemen of Paris, who saw in me something better than the ordinary mountebank. I dressed well, and was often invited by gentlemen to dine. My company pleased them, for I had seen a good deal of the world, and had a pleasant way of relating my adventures.

"Among the acquaintances I thus formed was a man who had the *entrée* into the best society in Paris. This was the Count of Montebello, a very accomplished gentleman of the most fascinating manners. He took a great fancy to me, and often had me to dine with him. I became much attached to him, and would have done anything in my power to serve him.

"I have hurried over many of the events of my early life, Myra, but I think I have told you enough to give you an idea of my unhappy condition from the age of six up to that of sixteen."

"Yes," said Myra, pressing his hand, "and my heart bleeds to think of the sufferings you have undergone."

"Ah !" said Robert, "I fear you will hardly have the fortitude to hear the narrative of what I am about to relate. The Count of Montebello several times offered to introduce me into society, saying to me, 'Your face, figure, and address will make your fortune, and you are throwing away your talents in the profession you are now following. Give up the circus and take to something else.'

"'What else can I do ?' I replied. 'This is all the business I know, and I could not obtain as large a salary at anything else.'

"'Pshaw !' said he, 'you speak five languages ; that's a good fortune in itself. You could put yourself forward as an instructor of languages, and, with my influence and that of my friends, you could double your present salary. Every woman in Paris of any note would patronize you, and there's no knowing what good fortune

you would fall heir to. Those magnetic eyes of yours would win the hearts of the women.' ”

Myra started as if something had frightened her.

“The count,” continued Robert, “constantly resumed this subject, and at last told me he was so anxious I should leave the circus that he would give me the appointment of his secretary at the same salary I was then receiving. ‘It need not be known,’ he said, ‘that you are my secretary, and you can establish yourself in Paris as a linguist. I can give you an introduction to the prime minister, who will be glad to give you employment as a translator.’ The arguments of this man were so seductive that I agreed to all his wishes.

“I called the same afternoon on Monsieur Petard, and he was much astonished when he found I was determined to leave him.

“He offered to double my salary, for he realized that I was the chief attraction of his circus. I told him that I was now more than ever determined to leave, inasmuch as I was satisfied he had been unjust to me in not paying me more for my services. Then he threatened to call the law to his aid and compel me to fulfill my contract.

“‘Ah, my friend,’ said I, ‘how easy it would be for me to lay myself up with a sprained foot or arm and make you pay the doctor’s bills!’

“‘*Sapristi!*’ exclaimed he, ‘I didn’t think of that!’

“‘My friend,’ said I, ‘you are going to travel in the provinces. That poor M. Vif, who has played the part of sub under me, can take my name of Le Diable. He has learned my way of doing things, and the country people will never know the difference between M. Vif and the veritable Diable.’

“‘Yes,’ said Monsieur Vif, who was standing by listening to us, ‘I assure you, M. Petard, that M. Robert speaks to the point, and I shall not disappoint you.’

“‘Paff!’ said the manager, ‘that wild horse will eat you the first time you attempt to ride him.’ ‘I will undertake all but riding the horse,’ said M. Vif. ‘But how about making a hoop of yourself and going twice around the ring?’ ‘Well, we’ll omit that,’ said M. Vif. ‘How about swinging two-hundred-pound weights about your head and running with them around the circle?’ ‘I can use sheet-iron weights of the same size,’ said M. Vif, ‘and I can imitate very well all the other things.’ ‘Well, needs must when the devil drives,’ said M. Petard. The affair was settled, and I rejoined my patron at dinner.

“‘Now,’ said the count, ‘Le Preux, we must begin business this very evening. I am going to introduce you to the Marquis and Marquise of Cassarole. They are the leading people in Paris. Once get a footing there, and you can go where you will in this city. The marquise is very fascinating, they say, for I don’t think she affects me, although she is always very civil, and, as she knows I have an unlimited number of acquaintances among young men of note, she requests me to bring them with me when I think proper.

“‘The marquis, unlike his wife, is no longer young. She is but twenty-two. As he is very rich, he has settled a million francs on the marquise, the interest of which is her pin-money. They live in a splendid mansion on the Avenue de Clichy, and, although the marquise is propriety itself, she adores men of your style.’

“So it was arranged that at nine o’clock the Count of Montebello should call for me at my new lodgings in the Rue Tivoli—for I had left the Hôtel la Fame—in his handsome cabriolet, and I was to accompany him to the mansion of the marchioness, who was to hold a reception for a few select people.

“In fifteen minutes after the count called at my lodgings we were ascending the marble steps of the Hôtel Cassarole. The entrance to the mansion was lighted by a hundred lamps, and at the door were a dozen footmen dressed in splendid liveries, while as many more were in attendance in the grand hall.

“Sweet music from the garden just reached the ear, while the perfume of orange-blossoms floated upon the air. The interior of the mansion was brilliantly lighted, and numerous singing-birds, supposing it to be daylight, were twittering away as if their little hearts were perfectly happy.

“All that money could purchase, or good taste supply, was found in the grand salons of the mansion. I can not describe it all—in fact, I hate to think of it, for it was through the enchantments of this fairy realm that much of my life was embittered, and I would like to drive the memory of the place from my mind. I have a deep abiding feeling of revenge toward those who lived in it, and whom in time I hope to punish as they deserve.

“When I entered the reception-room with the count, the marchioness was reclining upon an ottoman covered with cream-colored damask. She looked very beautiful, and was surrounded by several distinguished-looking gentlemen, who were doing their best to make themselves agreeable. As I entered the door I noticed that

her eye brightened as she turned toward the count and myself, to the neglect of her devotees.

"The count approached, rather too obsequiously, as I thought, for a gentleman whose position in society was so well assured, and presented me, who followed rather timidly in the rear, for I had not been used to such splendor. Although I had conversed with grand ladies at the circus, I had never before been in a presence such as this.

"The count introduced me, saying, 'Madame la Marquise, permit me to introduce to you my esteemed friend, the Chevalier le Preux, whom I hope you will find a *preux chevalier*.'

"'Welcome to my house, sir,' said she, giving me the tips of her fingers. 'I am glad to welcome any friend of the Count of Montebello, although I shall be glad to welcome you on your own account.' As she passed me to speak to the count, I heard her say, softly, 'What a magnificent-looking man!' which I now know was intended for me to hear.

"The marchioness then resumed her seat, and insisted on my taking a position on her right hand. She took pains to render herself very agreeable to me, to the astonishment of the young Parisians, who remembered seeing me at the circus, and who could not but be struck with the *gaucherie* that affected my whole manner. They stood apart, evidently comparing notes about me, while the marchioness, not regarding their movements, seemed anxious that I should feel at ease.

"Beautiful though the marchioness was, there was something in the glitter of her eye that repelled me."

Myra's hand closed on Robert's at this remark.

"She was a dark beauty," he continued, "with black hair. Her dress ornaments and the fittings of the room were all made to harmonize with the marchioness's complexion. Her dress was a rich corn-color, trimmed with black lace, and she looked more like a Spanish beauty than a Frenchwoman. Her manners were certainly most agreeable, despite little peculiarities that I noticed in her smile and general expression of face.

"Few people came that evening, considering the style in which the house was illuminated. They seemed to be distinguished people, to whom the marchioness devoted herself with all the grace practiced in the highest social circles of Paris.

"There was no dancing, but refreshments were served in one of the apartments, of which the guests partook as it suited them.

"I have often, Myra, since that time, drawn comparisons between that assemblage and the many I have attended in this country, where you are wedged up in a crowd so dense that you can't turn around, and where the party-givers seem to be possessed with the idea of entertaining as many people as they can squeeze into their house and making them enjoy themselves, while the guests generally are abusing their entertainers and wondering how *they* came to give a party!

"The French are considered a frivolous people; but Paris is the school of good manners, and Parisians the only ones that know how to entertain.

"When the guests were taking their departure, the Count of Montebello whispered to me to remain till the last, that we might have a few words with the marchioness alone.

"When the rest of the company had departed and we approached to take leave, the hostess took me kindly by the hand, and her dark eyes glittered with that peculiar expression I have already mentioned, as she said, 'Do come again; come often. It is so refreshing to meet a man like you, who has seen the world and can talk of something besides the cafés and clubs of Paris. I am bored with all subjects of this kind.' I blushed, and, promising to repeat my visit, took my leave.

"The count laughed when we got into the carriage, which was waiting for us. 'By George, Le Preux,' said he, 'you are in luck. She never said that much to any one before. If it were known it would compromise her.'

"'I shall never mention it,' said I. 'Nor I,' said the count, and we drove home without further conversation.

"Early next morning the count called at my lodgings, and found me dressing. 'Here, my friend,' said he, 'is a note of invitation for you to breakfast with the marquise at half-past one to-day. *Corpo di Bacco!* but you are making rapid headway. It is those soft eyes of yours that have done the mischief; and, after all, our marquise has the weakness of human nature, and no wonder, when she is tied to an old catamaran like that husband of hers.'

"'Pshaw!' said I, 'don't talk nonsense. The marchioness is kindly disposed toward me—nothing more. She cares no more for me than for you.'

"'Make hay while the sun shines, my friend,' said the count. 'You may never have such another chance. I will call for you at one twenty.'



"When we repaired to the Hôtel de Cassarole, we found the marchioness charmingly dressed in white muslin, trimmed with lace, and looking cool as a spring morning. When breakfast was announced, we were ushered into a charming little room and seated at a small round table.

"There were no other guests than the count and myself. Everything was served in fine style, and the viands were seasoned by the lively wit of the hostess, who had no difficulty in entertaining two gentlemen.

"The breakfast was nearly over, when the door opened and an elderly gentleman appeared, standing as if uncertain whether or not he was welcome, when the marchioness jumped up and said, 'How fortunate! My dear husband, you are just in time for breakfast. I don't often have this pleasure.' Taking the gentleman by the hand, she led him forward, and said, 'My dear Charles, let me introduce you to the Count de Montebello and M. le Preux.'

"'I already have the pleasure of knowing the count,' said the marquis. 'M. le Preux, I am extremely happy to make your acquaintance. I am sure you are enjoying yourselves, for no one can be in the presence of the marquise without feeling the influence of her charming society.'

"'Ah, flatterer!' said the lady, 'you think every one looks at me with your eyes, and that your poor little Elene has wonderful merit. But I am neither more nor less than a good little wife, who does her best to entertain her husband's friends. But, my dear, come and sit by us, and enliven us with your agreeable conversation, for you know all things and have so much to talk about.'

"'Yes,' said the marquis, 'I know some things I wouldn't like to talk about. I will take a cup of coffee, nothing more; I slept badly last night.'

"I thought I detected a look of intelligence between the count and the marchioness; but it may have been only my imagination.

"The marquis sat down and drank his coffee, and, while drinking, kept up an animated conversation. He drew me out and made me tell him all the places I had visited; 'for,' said he, 'I am a Frenchman, and have never been out of France. I can not get good coffee except in Paris, and as for the wine they have in other places, it is execrable.'

"I told him of many things he had read about but never seen, but he was particularly pleased with the account of my method of

taming wild horses. 'Ah!' said he, 'I have one horse you couldn't tame. He would bite your head off. Oh, he is a devil; but he takes sugar out of my wife's hand.'

"I noticed that all the marquis's conversation was addressed to me, and not to the count, a circumstance that did not seem to disturb the latter in the least.

"The Marquis of Cassarole was probably about sixty, although he looked older; and the difference between the apparent age of himself and wife was striking.

"He was a gentleman in manner and conversation, but in all he said the cynic was continually peeping out. His maxim was: 'the nature of man is bad—the nature of woman is worse.' After conversing a while and sipping his coffee, the marquis politely took his leave, the marchioness kissing her husband's withered cheek.

"Then the count said that, unhappy as it made him, he must leave his charming hostess, as he had business that would not wait claiming his attention.

"'But,' said the marchioness, 'your friend will remain, for I have three weary hours to be alone before I put on my riding-toilet?'

"Of course I was only too happy to stay, and the count departed.

"When he was gone the marchioness said, 'Now we will repair to my boudoir, where I admit my best friends only,' and she rang for a servant. 'Henri,' said she, 'I am not at home to any one.' We repaired to the boudoir, which was elegantly fitted up, and decorated with a profusion of flowers, while birds were singing as if enjoying their freedom in the woods. There was everything that was calculated to captivate the senses; and I, who was unaccustomed to such beautiful surroundings, could not help being overcome by it all.

"'Ah,' said I, 'how beautiful all this is! You must be very happy with so indulgent a husband.'

"'Yes,' replied the marchioness, 'happy in a certain sense, but everything palls upon me; I have too much. It doesn't bring me the kind of happiness I want. I would give everything for two hours of your fresh conversation, your original ideas, and to hear you relate your travels, which you do so charmingly.'

"'I can not find words to thank you, madame,' I replied, and blushed like a girl.

"'Ah, one can see,' she said, 'you are not of Paris—you are so ingenuous! Half the women in this city pay these compliments

without meaning them. They are the small talk of society, and generally signify nothing ; but I mean them seriously. You will never succeed in Paris until you are initiated into all the mysteries of refined society. If you are not on your guard, some one will take you in. You must have a monitor. Let me be the one,' and her eye softened as she looked at me with the kindness of a mother watching over me.

" ' Ah,' said I, ' I should be too happy to have such a monitor, for under such auspices I could hold my own in Paris.'

" ' And then,' said she, ' after I have fairly launched you on the sea of fame, you will desert me for some painted doll, of which there are plenty hereabouts.'

" ' Do I look like one of that kind ?' said I. ' I assure you, madame, that I only desire to live and die in your service. I know that I shall never find any one for whom I shall feel more respect than I do for you.'

" She laughed outright. ' This is delicious ! To think that I should be the one to discover such a pearl ; it would be thrown away on any one else. My dear child, you must never use the word respect in Paris, except as applied to a servant. Servants profess to respect us, their superiors, although they laugh at our foibles ; but the words love, friendship, admiration, and adoration are the ones used in polite society. You have much to learn, and I must see you every day to give you lessons in the usages of our polite society.'

" ' Oh, happiness unspeakable !' said I. ' I can never repay you, madame, for your kind interest in me.'

" ' You are a godsend to me,' replied the marchioness. ' I am tired of all the men in Paris ; they bore me to death. You are to me like a fresh new book, from whose pages I can gather original ideas. The more I read the more I am interested. You are to me a revelation, a dream, and I fear to awake and have it fleet away. Yet, with all your magnificence of form and feature, you are but a child to me in years and experience.'

" ' What could I say to all this flattery ? Nothing ; and I kept silent.

" ' Now,' said the marchioness, ' tell me your age and place of birth.'

" ' I don't know where I was born, madame,' said I. ' To be frank with you, I am a *chevalier d'industrie*, an adventurer. I am a waif that no one owns. I have no relatives on earth that I am aware

of, and no memory of anything concerning my infancy except a dear mother's sweet face and mild, affectionate eyes.'

"'So much the better,' she said. 'No one can claim you; you will suit my purposes better. I intend to take charge of your interests. And your age?'

"'I am not nineteen,' I replied, 'although I look older.'

"'Astonishing,' said the marchioness. 'With such a matured form and the limbs of a Hercules—I can hardly believe it,' and, rising, she twisted my curls in her beautiful fingers."

Myra gave a nervous twitch at this part of the story.

"'Poor child!' said the marchioness, 'you are three years younger than I am, and the difference in our ages will give me many privileges I could not otherwise have. I can have you as my cavalier, and can see you daily without exciting remark; for the world will say he is so young and the marchioness so irproachable. I will take you into the best society.'

"She kept her word. For a week I breakfasted with her daily alone, and in the evening I with some other gentleman rode with her, for we were never alone together in public. At the end of the week I was perfectly infatuated with her.

"On the seventh day of my acquaintance with the marchioness the Count of Montebello called at my lodgings for me to take a stroll. We walked along the Boulevard des Italiens, when the Count called my attention to a shop filled with curiosities, ancient arms, and all sorts of lumber. 'This fellow,' said the count, 'has the best collection of old arms in Paris, and perhaps in Europe. He has almost impoverished me by selling me antiquities at the most extortionate prices. I have a beautiful collection purchased from him; but I do not dare to go into his store now, for I can not resist buying an article if it strikes my fancy.'

"'You have never shown me your collection,' said I.

"'No,' he replied; 'I send all the arms to Italy, where they are put up on the walls of my house there. Look!' he said, suddenly; 'see that beautiful Malay creese. It's worth its weight in gold. It has been an heirloom in some great family. How did this old wretch of a dealer come by it? I say, Le Preux, go in and price it, and, if the rascal doesn't ask over a thousand francs, buy it for me. If I went in, the old man would persuade me to take it at two thousand. Here's the money. I'll walk on till you join me.'

"I did not hesitate to do as requested, and entered the shop, while the count walked on. I asked to look at the creese, which

was handed me by the shopkeeper, an old man with piercing gray eyes. On asking the price, he said five hundred francs.

"‘Too much,’ said I. ‘I know these trinkets well; I have handled them often, and this is not an uncommon specimen.’

"‘Nonsense!’ said the dealer; ‘the Count de Montebello would give me a thousand francs for this lovely article. Do you know the count? He is a connoisseur in these things.’

"‘No,’ said I, ‘and it isn’t likely I am as rich as he is.’

"‘The count is not rich,’ said the man, ‘and I have a great deal of trouble in getting my money from him. I have to make a discount on every bill I send him.’

"I thought this information peculiar, as it did not tally with what the count had told me; but it was none of my business, so I paid the old fellow his price, and, taking the creese, was walking out of the shop, when the old man said, politely, ‘Will you please favor me with your name and address? When we sell valuable articles we like to know who the purchasers are.’

"‘No matter about my name,’ said I. ‘You have your money, and that’s all that is necessary.’

"‘Well,’ said the shopkeeper, ‘one can have little difficulty in finding you, for there are not many in Paris who resemble you.’

"I then joined the count and gave him the creese. We walked a little farther, and then parted to go to our respective quarters.

"When I got home I found a note from the marchioness inviting me to breakfast with her, as she was sad and wanted to be cheered up. Her dear marquis was quite sick, she wrote, and invisible to her even; and her note ended with some flattering expressions of her interest in one so young.

"I had a vague feeling of distrust when I read the note; and that night, when I went to bed, I saw the sweet face of my mother bending over me, her eyes filled with tears. I awoke, and could sleep no more. All the morning I felt uneasy—why, I could not tell—and did not get over this dread feeling until I had walked half a dozen miles around the city. Then I went home, dressed, and repaired to the Hôtel de Cassarole.

"I found the marchioness sad and weary; but she soon became cheerful, and chatted on as usual. When breakfast was over, she led me to her boudoir, and gave orders to Henri that she was not at home to any one.

"Myra, I would give worlds if I had never seen that woman—if I had never gone to that breakfast; for she threw a net around

me that bound every limb, and breathed words into my ear that dazed my senses.

"She gradually laid aside the mask of sisterly character and addressed me in words of passion. She lay in my arms, and I kissed those ripe lips until my senses quite forsook me."

At this Myra slowly withdrew her hand from his and sat upright. Robert did not notice the movement, but proceeded with his story.

"The marchioness persuaded me to come to her room that night, that we might enjoy ourselves without fear, and gave me a key with which to enter the garden-gate and the house. In an evil hour I consented, and then she hurried me away and would permit no further caresses. I imagined that I saw the steel glitter in her eyes as she bade me farewell, but I was so intoxicated with passion that I could not reason with myself. I had drunk more wine than was usual, and when I got home I threw myself upon my bed and fell into a deep sleep.

"Eleven o'clock was the hour that I was to be at the mansion. I was to enter the garden-gate and follow the portico around until I came to a door, which I was to pass through, then cross a chamber which would lead to another room, where I would find the marchioness waiting for me.

"At the appointed hour I was at the garden-gate, but my hand trembled so that I could hardly put the key in the lock. It was the first time in my life that I had trembled. I had faced every danger; was always ready to undertake anything: why, then, did I tremble then? It was because I was entering a man's house like a thief to commit the worst of crimes.

"I had never wronged any one before; now I was about to injure a poor old man who had treated me with kindness, and who had lavished millions upon the wife who was now about to betray him.

"But my reason had fled. I could only see that beautiful woman who had given up everything to meet me clandestinely. What greater insult could I offer her than not to go to the appointed place? Reason said, 'It is a crime she wants you to commit—flee from crime.' Passion said, 'Poor fool! another soon will fill your place, and the woman who now loves you will become your bitter enemy.' Conscience said, 'You will dishonor an old man's gray hairs.' Passion said, 'How dared he even permit a young and beautiful woman to be tied to him through his years of decrepitude when she is in the bloom of youth? Is it not an honor to

be loved by such a woman? Does not she make all the sacrifice? What do I lose? I will meet her, and sacrifice all doubts in the happiness awaiting me.'

"Passion conquered, and Reason and Conscience went away, weeping sorrowfully over one who had thrown aside their counsels to embark in crime.

"On I went, following the directions I had received. I had passed into the house. A light shining through a nearly closed door piloted me, like the light-house, I thought, that had so often shown me the way into port. On the contrary, it was the *ignis fatuus* leading me to destruction.

"I opened the door and looked in. A single light was burning behind the rich hangings of a couch. The room was the embodiment of luxury. 'All this for me,' said I to myself, 'and I to hesitate! The marchioness awaits me behind those curtains.'

"I stood beside the couch—oh, horror!—was it not a hideous dream? No, it was the horrible reality I had to face. There was no marchioness with ripe lips and passionate eyes waiting to embrace me, but the dead body of her murdered husband, with wide-staring eyes, that I saw before me. But—horror of horrors!—the creese that I had purchased the day before was sticking in the old man's heart!

"I said to myself, 'This is death to me if I am caught here,' and I turned to fly from the spot; but the door through which I had entered the room was fastened.

"The other door was unlocked, and I hurried through it into a wide hall and passed rapidly on, seeking an outlet to the street. I ran against a servant half asleep, who exclaimed, 'Pardon me, M. le Preux,' for he knew me. Further on I ran against another. My weight threw him down, and his fall aroused two of his comrades who were dozing. They all recognized me, for it was light enough in the hall for them to do so.

"The porter rushed to open the door, but I pushed him aside and darted down the steps. I heard the fellow say, 'Bless me, he is crazy!' But, not heeding the remark, on I rushed, running against people in the streets, who swore at me for a clumsy fellow. Finally I reached my lodgings and flung myself exhausted upon a sofa.

"I had lost my head entirely, and it was some time before I could recall what had happened. Looking in the glass, I was shocked at my own appearance—my face as white as marble and my

eyes starting from my head. My nose was bleeding from the exertions I had made.

"My coolness soon began to return, and a glass of brandy soothed my shattered nerves. I, who had never before known what it was to have nerves, to be so shattered at the sight of a dead body ! But those dreadful staring eyes, the dropped jaw and protruding tongue of the dead man, were still before me, and I could not drive away the sight. I raised the windows, for, though the night was cool, I was suffocating for the want of fresh air. I could look upon the streets of the great city with its myriad lights and people hurrying hither and yon. I wondered if any knew of the tragedy at the Hôtel Cassarole.

"I thought I had made a mistake and got into the wrong room, and fancied how horror-struck the marchioness would be when she heard of the murder in the morning. Was it not my duty to have announced the fact and helped to ascertain who the murderer was ?

"Instead of that, I was seen rushing away from the dead man's room. What excuse could I give for being there ?

" 'Perhaps I shall be suspected of the murder,' I thought, and I stood aghast at the thought.

"Then my danger rose before me in its hideousness. I could see the servants testifying to my strange behavior ; the porter at my door would give evidence of my hurried exit from the house. Then the man who sold the creese would testify to my buying it, and my refusal to give my name. And who would believe me if I said I bought the creese for the Count of Montebello ? And how came the creese there ? The count must have been connected in some way with the murder, and yet what object had he ? He was a nobleman, and already had the *entrée* into the Hôtel de Cassarole.

" 'And then,' thought I, 'what will the marchioness think of me—the murderer—whom she was expecting to meet—to find I had stopped on the way and killed her husband—perhaps attracted by his gold ?

" 'God in heaven, have mercy on me !' I exclaimed, 'or I am lost.' I paced my apartment like a maniac until my eyes rested on the water in the hand-basin, and a handkerchief lying beside it, bloody from the discharges from my nose. My blood almost froze in my veins to think that any one entering the room would see these evidences of guilt !

"But let me breathe a few moments ere I go on."



## CHAPTER XII.

## ROBERT LE DIABLE CONTINUES HIS STORY.

"IN the midst of my dismay," resumed Robert, "three *gens d'armes*, accompanied by the *procureur du roi* and his secretary, entered my room. I was thunderstruck and could not speak. No explanations were asked. I was seized and, without a word, placed in irons. I burst into tears and sobbed like a child, but in a few moments my speech came back to me.

"'I am innocent of this murder, although appearances are against me,' I exclaimed.

"'Who hinted there was a murder?' said the *procureur du roi*, sharply. 'I would advise you, young man, to be cautious and say nothing. I detain you now to secure your person until the arrival of the prefect of police. The Marquis de Cassarole was found murdered to-night in his bed, and you were seen in the house under very suspicious circumstances. If you have any explanations, make them when you are brought before the *juge d'instruction*.'

"Just then the prefect arrived, and, having received the report of the *procureur*, he commenced investigating the room, a clerk writing down the proceedings as he went along.

"The prefect's attention was first attracted by the basin and bloody handkerchief. 'A bungler!' he said, aside.

"'I can account for that,' said L. 'My nose has been bleeding, and I washed my face.'

"'Perhaps,' he said. 'Give me all your keys.' He then examined everything in the room. In the drawer of my dressing-table he found the scabbard of a creese. 'This corresponds,' said he, 'to the weapon found in the marquis's body; write that down.'

"When I saw this evidence against me the perspiration stood upon my forehead in great drops.

"On a further search they found behind a wardrobe a box of burglar's tools, containing boring-bits, steel saws, files, and, among other things, a magnetic needle for ascertaining the position of iron bolts inside a door. 'This is rather damaging evidence,' remarked the prefect.

"'I never saw these articles before,' I said to him, earnestly. I began to think I was dead, and that these things were happening in another world.

"In another drawer they found a bag of gold and a package containing five one-thousand-franc notes.

" 'Are these yours ?' inquired the prefect.

" 'No,' said I, 'I never saw them before.'

"In one of my boots they found a gold watch, with chain and seals, bearing the arms of the Cassarole family. 'How do you account for these ?' said the prefect.

" 'I know nothing about them,' I replied, quite indifferent to what they might find. I saw that I was lost, and determined to meet my fate like a man.

"A pocket-book partly consumed by fire was found in the grate, but still bearing the coat of arms of the murdered marquis.

"There was evidence enough against me to convict me a thousand times, and my blood froze in my veins. I could already see the executioner standing over me, the crowd of people exulting over my fate, and my body thrown into a felon's grave.

"I thanked God that I had no one to lament my fate—no relatives to disgrace—and I hoped that my sweet mother had long since descended to her grave, that she might not trace in Le Preux, the murderer, the child she once loved so well.

" 'If I have sinned in thought,' I mused, 'I have paid dearly for it. This murder has saved me from a crime, and I shall go to my grave innocent of having broken any of God's ordinances.' The bitterest enemies I had in the world would, I thought, forgive me if they knew how I had suffered."

Myra clasped Robert's fingers with a feverish pressure.

"The prefect made every effort to obtain still further evidence against me : took up the carpet, sounded the walls and floor, but nothing more was found ; and I was committed to prison.

"In the mean time the commissaire of police and the police surgeon had visited the Hôtel Cassarole. The surgeon found that the marquis had been struck by a powerful hand right through the heart, and that he must have died instantly. There was little or no blood visible, the hemorrhage being altogether internal. The servants' testimony showed that the marquis had been for some time ailing, and that on the night of his death he had retired to rest earlier than usual ; that the marchioness had seen him and bade him good-night, and that Henri, the servant, had fastened all the windows and doors except the door by which he went out, and that after he left the room he heard the marquis lock and bolt that door. The marquis had with him two candles, one of which was lighted.

Henri further stated that at about eleven o'clock, when he was on duty in the main hall, M. le Preux hurried from the marquis's room, ran against him, and rushed out of the front door—all of which was corroborated by the other servants. Thinking it very strange, they went into the marquis's room and found him murdered.

"It was further ascertained that at eleven o'clock that night the marchioness was having a little supper in her apartments, at which five gentlemen were present, including the Count de Montebello; and that when the servants made the horrible discovery, they called out the Count de Montebello, who sent at once for the police authorities.

"The other four gentlemen testified that they had arrived at the house a little before eleven, and had just taken seats at the table when the Count de Montebello was called out; that the marchioness, following to see what had happened, fainted in the hall on hearing the news, and that she had been insensible nearly all the time since, under charge of her physician.

"The servant, Henri, also testified that the marquis's watch, a bag of gold, and some notes had been taken.

"All this evidence indicated me as the murderer, and I was not surprised that everybody believed me guilty.

"Then the detectives were set to work to find out how the robbery and murder were committed. The French detective is a creature by himself; there is none other on earth like him. His methods are peculiar, and he neglects not the smallest object that will afford him an item of information.

"The detectives commenced their work in the garden adjoining the Hôtel Cassarole. They found in the beds the impress of two different sets of shoes—one a gentleman's boot with high heels, the other a slipper without heels; and they found that the gardener's shoes were wholly unlike these impressions.

"Both sets of footprints were followed across the garden-beds to the door in the porch where I entered, and there they ended, a few dirt-marks only being found on the carpet. The door leading from the porch was closely examined, and it was found that a small boring-bit had been used over the iron bolt that fastened the door on the inside. After boring the hole the bolt had been shot, and, after turning the key with a pair of nippers, the murderer had entered.

"The door was found bolted and locked on the inside, and the hole filled with a composition so much resembling the wood of the door as to be invisible to ordinary eyes.

"The door leading to the marquis's room had been similarly dealt with, and had also been found locked and bolted on the inside ten minutes after I had rushed through the hall.

"The magnetic needle found in my room was clearly the instrument used by the murderer, and this fact told with fearful effect against me in the court-room.

"It was not discovered whose were the second set of footsteps, and how it was that the outside door was fastened on the inside, as a murderer would naturally leave that way for escape open.

"There was really no hope for me, and I had lost the courage which had hitherto been part of my nature. I could not explain why I was in the house that night, for to do so would compromise the marchioness. Besides, if I told the truth, who would believe me? I made up my mind to die, and not to make any disclosures.

"I was taken to the Prison of St. Pelasgie and locked up in a dark cell by myself. The jailer, as he put irons on my hands and feet, said, 'Well, M. Robert le Diable' (for all Paris knew me), 'I have seen you perform prodigies of strength, but these will, I think, hold you until the executioner calls for you.'

"'Do you think,' said I, 'that these fetters would hold me if I wanted to break them? Do you think the *gens d'armes* could have taken me if I had thought proper to have resisted them? No. I respect the law, and if you put on cobweb fetters I would wear them until the law removed them.'

"'Nonsense,' said the jailer, 'these fetters will hold you fast enough.'

"'Would you like me to show you my strength?' said I, desirous of impressing this man with my power, 'and will you promise me not to make use of it against me?'

"'Yes,' said he, 'I would like to see it, and won't mention it.'

"'Then put two pairs of handcuffs on my wrists, for these are only tin ones.' He did so, and with one twist I sent both pairs flying across the cell. Then, stooping and taking the chains attached to the fetters on my ankles in my hands, I broke them as if they were threads.

"'Robert le Diable is a good name for you,' said the jailer, 'but you mustn't try to escape.' He went out of the cell, and soon returned with four men, who loaded me with chains, which were secured to a large ring in the wall. 'There, my man,' said he, 'they will hold you.'

"I reproached the jailer for his treachery, but he merely shrugged his shoulders and said, 'You are Robert le Diable,' and, leaving me a supply of bread and water, he and his assistants departed.

"Next day the Count of Montebello got permission to see me alone. It was thought he could elicit something from me that would throw light on the murder, and perhaps discover who was my confederate, for the police were satisfied that two persons were concerned.

"'My poor, dear friend!' said the count, on entering my cell, 'this is dreadful. Tell me how it all happened, for I am satisfied that you are innocent of this murder.'

"'Thank God!' said I, 'that one person believes me innocent. I had no more to do with it than you.'

"'Was it to meet the marchioness that you went into the house?' said the count, and he looked at me with a penetrating glance. 'I know she loves you, and is more deeply grieved for your condition than for the death of her husband. She murmurs constantly, "Poor Le Preux!"'

"'No,' said I. 'What put that into your head? Even if it were so, I would die sooner than hint at such a thing.'

"'Well said, my dear Le Preux,' said the count. 'Your secret is sacred with me. As a man of honor you could do no less, and such an imputation upon the character of the marchioness would bring down the anathemas of all Paris on your head. You would lose what sympathy there is for you, and I assure you there is a great deal.'

"'Rest satisfied on that point,' said I. 'Hot pincers would not bring out anything from me derogatory to the marchioness. But, count, I do not understand how the Malay creese I purchased for you was found in the marquis's body.'

"'Ah!' said the count, 'I do not understand it either. The creese was stolen from my room by some one who knew my habits and wanted to lay the blame on me, knowing I was intimate at the Hôtel Cassarole. But why they should have hit upon that plan I can not conceive, for I was with the marchioness and two gentlemen from the time she left the marquis's room until the murder was discovered. One doesn't like to be mixed up in such matters in any way, and I now ask you the favor not to mention purchasing the weapon for me. It will do you no good, and may give me annoyance. No one would believe you unless I corroborated what you said. And as I can prove that the creese was taken from my room,

the court would say you were trying to connect my name with the murder to clear yourself.'

"'But,' said I, 'am I to make no effort to save myself?'

"'Make no effort of that kind,' said the count. 'I am your friend, and will employ the best counsel for you, and the marchioness, who loves you and believes you innocent, will move heaven and earth in your behalf. The police will soon find the guilty man, or men rather, for there were two persons engaged in the affair, and all you have to do is to be prudent and reticent in regard to the matters of which I have spoken.'

"'I will die before I will compromise my friends,' said I, whereat the marquis rose and shook me warmly by my manacled hand.

"'Don't mind these ruffles,' he said. 'We will wreath your brow with flowers when your innocence is proclaimed;' and he left me to reflect upon my folly, and with strong doubts of the count's integrity.

"I now recalled to mind certain looks of intelligence that I had observed pass between the count and the marchioness, and I remembered that peculiar glitter of her gray eyes that made me shudder. I remembered that she would always find some excuse to follow the count out and have something to say to him, although she professed to me not to like him. There had been, I began to see, a perfect understanding between the two, but what could I do? I could not prove my suspicions; my only chance of salvation was not to excite their enmity.

"My old friend, the landlord of La Fame, was the only other person who ever came to see me in the way of friendship. When he came into my cell his eyes were filled with tears. He grasped me warmly by the hand and said, 'My boy, I know you are innocent, though appearances are against you. Such a deed is contrary to your nature. You did not care for money, and had no debts.'

"'Thank you, old friend,' I replied, 'for your good opinion. I swear to you that I am as innocent as you are of this crime, but I can never make my innocence manifest. I shall either be executed or sent to the galleys for life. Death is preferable to the latter. You can do me but one favor. The prefect of police has in his hands some money and effects belonging to me. Have a power of attorney made out to take possession of everything of mine. Pay my landlord for my room up to the end of the month, according to

my agreement, and when I am dead see that I have decent burial. If I ever get free I will claim my clothes, but keep everything else to remember me by.'

"The old man wept. 'I will do as you request,' said he, and the keeper announced that the allotted time for visitors had expired. We parted to meet no more, but I signed the power of attorney, and the old man carefully preserved my effects.

"When my case came before the *juge d'instruction*, all the witnesses were examined and the most minute circumstances inquired into. I found that a French court is a very different affair from an English or an American tribunal. In France everything is done to accumulate evidence against the accused, and he is expected to prove himself innocent or be condemned. The office of *procureur de roi* is a court; that of prefect of police is a court; the office of *juge d'instruction* is a grand-jury and court; and then comes the Court of Assize, which winds up the business, as from it there is practically no appeal.

"After all the evidence was taken before the *juge d'instruction* I was called upon by that functionary, in the most compassionate tone, to admit the crime and name my accomplices, so that justice would be appeased. The judge kindly informed me that it would go much harder with me unless I made a confession, and that by not informing on my confederate I was letting a villain run loose upon society who would perhaps commit still greater crimes, and I would be *particeps criminis* in all he did, as if my own sins were not enough without burdening me with the sins of others.

"'But,' said I to the judge, 'I have committed no crime and have no confederate. I could make statements, but they would not be believed.'

"'Speak,' said the judge, 'and clear yourself if you can. You are too young to die without an effort to save yourself.'

"'My life is dear to me,' I said, 'but my honor is dearer, and I would rather die than violate it!'

"The people in the court applauded this sentiment, but the judge sternly admonished them to be quiet. 'We are dealing,' said he, 'with stern facts, and if this man is concealing anything from the court calculated to defeat the ends of justice, he is committing a great crime. His ideas of honor should yield to the demands of the law.'

"At this moment a man rose to his feet in the farther end of the room. It was the Count of Montebello. He looked sternly at

me, and the words 'Be careful' came to my ears. The judge looked around at the sound, as did many others, but no one noticed it further.

"I remembered too well the conversation I last had with the count, and trembled for fear that I had made a bitter enemy; so I answered the judge firmly, 'I may be wrong; that rests with my conscience. But I prefer not to give evidence that will compromise any one unless certain of what I am saying. I only insist that I am innocent of this crime. I have no more to say.'

"Turning, I saw the count leaving the court-room, his face radiant, and, catching my eye, he smiled kindly upon me.

"The judge then said, 'Prisoner, your case has been carefully investigated, and you have been given the opportunity of explaining to the court any of the circumstances connected with it. You have declined to defend yourself, and the court believes you to be guilty of the crime with which you are charged. You stand committed to appear in twenty days' time before the Court of Assize.'

"Thus ended my examination before the *juge d'instruction*. It was equivalent to a condemnation.

"I can not tell you, Myra, with what feelings I went back to my dreadful cell again, to be chained to the wall like a wild beast, and the horrid twenty days I spent anticipating my final trial. I longed for the time to come that my sufferings might be ended. Life might be desirable under different circumstances, but I did not care to possess it pent up with darkness and rats, for the latter came out of their holes at intervals to partake of my prison fare. The face of the brutal keeper was a treat to me when he came twice a day to bring my food and examine my fastenings.

"The day before I was to appear at the Court of Assize a ray of hope dawned upon me. As I ate my bread a small note dropped upon the floor in the writing of the Count of Montebello. I could hardly read it for excitement, but at length, by the dim light which straggled into my cell, I read as follows:

"Be cheerful. The countess will testify in your favor to-morrow, and her evidence will acquit you.'

"That night I slept soundly, and, when called upon to appear before the court next morning, I was in better spirits than I had been before since my arrest.

"Let me hurry over the proceedings of the assize court. It was almost a repetition of the investigation by the *juge d'instruction*. The evidence as to my criminality was overwhelming, but I still



kept up a bold front, expecting to be exonerated when the marchioness gave her testimony. I could not imagine what it was to be, but woman's love I thought would find a way to clear me.

"At length the marchioness appeared, supported by her father and the Count of Montebello, and I could see that she trembled violently. I had been told by the keeper that she had been ill in bed ever since the murder.

"The marchioness took her place in the witness-chair, but on the first question she went into the most terrible hysterics. It was found necessary to remove her to her house, where the prefect said he would send and have her testimony taken.

"'Never mind,' said the judge, 'her testimony will not be important. The evidence is complete already.'

"My lawyer then addressed the court, saying his client expected that the marchioness's evidence would be very important to him. The judge replied, 'Do not trifle with the court. It is not likely that any evidence that bereaved woman can give will help the accused. Not a single word has yet been said in his favor, and no more witnesses will be summoned. If the marchioness gives any evidence in behalf of the accused, he shall have the benefit of it.'

"My lawyer, who was a man of some ability, had hitherto not much to say except to demur to evidence or to the rulings of the court. In his mind he believed me guilty, and couldn't help telling me so. How easily I could have changed his opinion, and perhaps turned the current in my favor! But honor forbade.

"'Not to consume the time of the court,' said the judge, 'and as another case comes on this afternoon, the prisoner will state all he knows of his crime and inform the court who were his confederates.'

"'I have nothing to say,' I answered, 'except that I am entirely innocent, and that I rely upon the evidence of the marchioness to clear me.'

"'Remember,' said the judge, 'that this is the last opportunity you will have to speak in your own defense. As things stand now, your case is hopeless.'

"The evidence of the marchioness was finally submitted to the court by a notary. She accused me of the murder of the marquis, declared that she had suspected me of the crime from the first, and affirmed that on the day before the murder I had asked her many questions in regard to the marquis's room, etc.

"I jumped up breathless with indignation. 'Let me speak,' I cried to the judge. 'I will expose this woman.'

"'Too late,' said the judge; 'your chance is gone, and your malice deprives you of all sympathy. Captain of the guard, make the prisoner preserve order.' Two *gens d'armes* took their stand by me, and I was silent.

"I made no more attempts to speak, but buried my face in my hands and resigned myself to my fate.

"The jury was out but fifteen minutes, and returned a verdict of murder in the second degree. The lenity of the verdict was because the jury believed I had a confederate, who may have struck the fatal blow. A French jury is always disposed to consider any point favorable to a prisoner. Before I left the circus I had become a great favorite with the public; all the jury had seen me perform, and they gave me the benefit of the doubt.

"When the verdict was rendered the judge addressed me as follows:

"'Prisoner, you have been convicted of a horrible crime after being allowed every indulgence to defend yourself. You have not offered a single particle of evidence in the way of a defense. You have borne the self-confident bearing of a man who thought his physical triumphs and popularity with the multitude, easily led away by show, would clear him before a jury of intelligent men. You have descended to the basest means to help you out of your dilemma, but, though the verdict is lenient, you have been found guilty. Your sentence is to serve in chains in the galleys for life, and may you repent of your sins.'

"I was not unmanned at this sentence, for I was too full of indignation. 'May you live to repent of this unjust sentence,' said I to the judge, 'and to find that the guilty ones are those who dwell in high places.' And with these words I walked firmly out of the court between my guards.

"All the papers of Paris, of course, had accounts of the trial and descriptions of the murderer, but, as I saw none of them, the articles did not annoy me.

"At the end of ten days orders came from the government that all those condemned to the galleys should be marched to Toulon to work on the hulks, a set of old vessels used for the confinement of convicts.

"Here was the end of my earthly hopes, for I could see no relief but in death, and how soon that came I did not care.

"The day after the order came we started for Toulon. There were forty convicts chained together two by two, a long chain running down the middle of the line and fastened to a locked chain around our waists.

"My companion in misery, with whom I was to eat, drink, and sleep as long as either of us lived, was a lively Frenchman sentenced for killing his wife—a deed he gloried in.

"‘We are comrades now, my boy,’ said he. ‘My name is Pierre Couteau. What is yours?’

"‘Mine is No. 36,’ said I. ‘I have no other from this until death.’

"Thus I was launched again upon the world, to be the companion of the most hardened wretches and to hold communion with all that was vile.

"One who should read my story, Myra, would scarcely believe it, but would imagine I had woven together a tissue of falsehoods. But truth is stranger than fiction; and events constantly take place in Paris more remarkable than those connected with myself. Few imagine how blind justice is in a country famous for its civilization; but justice in France too often means finding a victim to vindicate the majesty of the law and to show the world that, no matter how the perpetrators of crime may cover their tracks, in that country they are sure to be discovered."

As Robert proceeded with his tale Myra pressed close to his side, as if to shield him from harm, and when he told her how he was chained to the brutal murderer, she clasped his hand in hers, and, dropping her head upon it, she sobbed like a child. "Ah!" said she, "why should you have been made to suffer so, and you so young?"

He let his hand remain passive in hers, and went on without noticing her words or actions.

"We were taken at night in vans to a distance of twenty miles from Paris, and were then told to get out and walk the rest of the way. French convicts are self-sustaining, and all that is known of the galley-slaves is that they are working, under the hot sun of August or the cold blasts of December, to expiate the offenses for which they were convicted.

"No question is asked about any one that has been sent to the galleys. Some of my companions were sentenced for ten, some for twenty or thirty years, others for life. How the poor fellows with the shorter terms counted every day that passed! ‘I have only

nineteen years and three hundred and sixty-two days to serve,' said Pierre Couteau, 'and you?' 'I am for life,' said I, coldly.

"'I am sorry for you, my boy; you are so young and strong. I shall be fifty-two when I get out, if I don't escape sooner.'

"'Escape!' I said. 'Who could escape with all those muskets pointing at him? The guards would be glad of a chance to put a ball into any one that should try it.'

"'Who knows?' said Couteau. 'This is my second term. I served three years before, and escaped at the end of that time. What won't a brave heart accomplish? With such a stout fellow as you at my side, and with such blows as the one you gave that old marquis—why, you alone could whip a dozen guards.'

"'Silence!' said I, 'I am innocent. I never shed blood in my life.'

"'Ha! ha!' laughed Pierre Couteau, 'that's the old story. The young man who was chained to me last year told me the same thing; yet, when better acquainted, he confessed that he had stabbed a girl in a fit of jealousy. I honored him for his pluck.'

"'Gracious heaven!' said I to myself, 'am I to be tied for twenty years to a brute that glories in murder?'

"It was some relief to get out of the van and have the chance of walking once more, although we had the weight of our heavy chains to carry, and our guards were ready to use their whips on the slightest provocation.

"I had been so long confined that my limbs had become swollen, yet, though I could not have liberty, I could enjoy the fresh air, and the green fields we were now passing.

"The swallow, as he darted toward our line and then sailed off in search of food, made me long for my freedom; but the glitter of his wings and his merry chirp made my heart feel glad. It was so much better than the companionship of rats in a dark cell. Happiness, thought I, is but comparative, and no doubt many a home that we are passing holds hearts heavier than mine. Every palace has its skeleton-closet.

"We were many days on the road, making soldiers' marches. Our guards went through the same fatigue, but they had not the heavy chains to carry. Their limbs were free, and they could choose their companions.

"On the third day of the march my companion, No. 21, said to me, 'When two convicts are chained together, one always commands

the other's services. I intend to command, as you are but a boy; you will serve your father in serving me.'

" 'Never!' said I.

" 'Then,' said he, 'I will starve you; you shall have no bread until you submit, and if you report me to the guard I will make your life a hell to you by ways you know not of. The guard shall lash you fifty times a day.'

" With that he grabbed my allowance of bread, for we were then sitting by the roadside eating our evening meal.

" 'Give me that bread,' said I, 'or I will punish you.'

" 'Pshaw!' said he, 'I like that—a boy like you to talk that way! Why, I weigh two hundred and twenty pounds; and look at my arm.'

" I seized his arm and leg and brought them together so suddenly that he had no time to think. I held him as if in a vise. 'I give it up,' said Pierre Couteau; 'you are a mastodon! I will serve you, and I believe you will be a good comrade.'

" 'Yes,' said I, 'but don't attempt to impose on me, for you have no idea of my strength.'

" 'Yes, I have, my mastodon; I want no further proof of it.' This was our only difficulty. It was to our interest to be friends. Pierre's conversation was reckless and brutal, and his companionship was disgusting, but I bore with him as well as I could, for it was useless to complain.

" When we arrived at Toulon we were marched to the dock-yard and rowed to the hulks by a set of convicts worse-looking than ourselves. Our convict clothing was new, and our shoes still held together; the others had no shoes. Our faces were comparatively fair; theirs were burned blacker than those of Indians, and their feet were as hard as those of a camel.

" I shall never forget how those wretches jeered and laughed at us, calling us Paris swells. There was a good deal of French wit in their remarks, in spite of its vulgarity.

" 'Oh, God!' said I aloud, 'I wonder if I shall ever become like these.'

" 'No,' said Pierre, 'we shall escape before that time. These are third-termers, and ready for the devil to roast.'

" Our long chain was here taken off and fetters were riveted on our ankles and triced up by small chains fastened to the waist-chain, and we were put in a long iron cage on the deck of a hulk, with port-holes grated with heavy bars. Each of us received a

coarse blanket and a meal of bread and soup. Then we went to sleep and rested until gun-fire next morning.

"Soon after daylight we were landed, and had to carry heavy stone from one point to another in the dock-yard.

"No. 21 said to me, 'We must make a good reputation at the start. Most of these fellows get ill-treated because they are lazy and troublesome. Let us astonish the guards. My strength and yours combined is equal to at least five ordinary men, so let us commence with the largest stones. If we get into the good graces of the guards, they will trust us better and give us greater indulgences, and this will enable us to escape sooner.'

"Pierre was always talking of escaping, but I had little idea of release from my captivity except by death.

"The government was building a quay-wall of granite, the blocks for which were hauled on skids to the place where they were required. It usually took a dozen convicts to haul a stone of three hundred pounds weight. 'Here is one,' said I, 'of five hundred pounds weight' (all the stones were marked); 'let us commence with that.'

"'Mother of mercy!' cried Pierre, 'do you take me for an elephant?'

"'No,' I replied, 'but you are strong, and I will lift two thirds.'

"'Come on, then,' said he. And we bore the stone to the quay-wall. Such an unexampled piece of industry drew the attention of every one to us. The other convicts, who were hauling skids, dropped their ropes to look at us. The guards walked to the end of their beats to observe us better, and even the officers came out to see our performance.

"'Ah! Paris swells,' cried the convicts, 'you will soon tire of that amusement. Stick to the skids; it's healthier.' We did not heed their remarks, but worked on until the commandant ordered us to desist. Our reputation was made, and we did not forfeit it.

"I was two years in the convict gang of Toulon, and, although I underwent all the mental torture that can possibly be conceived, I never received a blow from a whip—which is more than can be said by convicts generally. I conformed to all the rules, was cheerful in manner, and had exhibited no desire to escape.

"'They are letting up on us two,' No. 21 remarked to me one day, 'and after a while we shall be trusted. Then, my boy, I'll show you how I can get away to America, where there are no hulks and no hanging for killing a wife.'

"There was a girl of about twelve years of age that was permitted to come into the dock-yard daily to sell cigars to the workmen. She was an interesting child and a general favorite, and often came near to No. 21 and myself, sometimes giving us a little tobacco or a piece of bread.

"One day, as my yokefellow and myself were sitting apart from the others on a large stone, she dropped her basket near us as if by accident, and the contents were scattered on the ground. While on her knees picking up her property she threw us two rolls of bread. 'Freedom!' she whispered, and moved on.

"'Take one,' said No. 21. 'No one will suspect you.' In obedience to this direction, I slipped one of them into the breast of my shirt.

"We passed on board the hulk at sunset, with the bread in our hands. No notice was taken of it by the examiners, who are appointed to search the convicts in case of suspicion. As soon as we could safely do so we broke open the bread, and found inside of each roll of bread a small file and steel saw. These we quickly concealed over a beam.

"I then altered my shirt, so that in the large seam of the back I could insert my two instruments; and No. 21 made a similar arrangement for the disposition of his tools.

"A month after this incident a vessel, bringing guns for the navy to Toulon, struck a rock off a point of land sheltering the bay and sunk. A large lighter filled with diving apparatus—windlasses, winches, etc.—was prepared to raise the guns, and two convict launches were detailed to tow the lighter out to the wreck and assist in raising the guns. No. 21 and I were among those detailed for this work, and we went to the task, with our saws and files safely concealed in the back of our shirts. At daylight the lighter started in tow of the launches. These launches were large, heavy boats, having twenty-six large oars each.

"When we reached the place of wreck the lighter was moored over the main hatch of the sunken vessel and secured head and stern so that she would not swing with the tide; and the two launches were hauled alongside of her, one on each side. Each launch had four guards with loaded muskets stationed in the stern-sheets to guard against a rising of the convicts, of which, however, there was little probability.

"We worked all that day, and recovered sixteen guns from the vessel. Ten more only remained. In the afternoon the com-

mandant of the dock-yard sent word for the work to proceed all night, as there were indications of rough weather, in which case the wreck would break up and make it difficult to recover the rest of the guns.

"Orders were given for our boat's crew to work from eight o'clock till midnight, the other from midnight till four o'clock, and so on till the guns were recovered.

"At about eight o'clock at night a cold, piercing rain set in. The guards stood it, wrapped in their great-coats, until nine o'clock, and then, considering that there was no danger of any one escaping, chained the launches to the lighter and went on board the latter to seek protection under a deck abaft the windlass.

"No. 21 and myself pulled the bow-oars of our launch, and our bow was on a line with the bow of the lighter. When it ran flood-tide, the current, which was very strong, ran from forward aft; when it ran ebb, the tide was from aft forward, the lighter being moored head and stern. The derricks and windlass were amidships, and the other boat lay sparred off.

"We worked all the first watch at the lifting apparatus, and were relieved at midnight by the other boat's crew. The guard saw us seated on our benches, or thwarts, where we were expected to sleep as well as we could. As the rain continued pouring in torrents, the guard soon withdrew again to the shelter of the lighter. The noise of the rain was so great that a man's voice could not be heard at a few feet distance.

"'Now is our time,' said I to No. 21, 'and we must be quick about it.'

"We had each one shackle on our legs to file through, besides a small chain that held the shackle up. We began to file at these rapidly, and finished the work in an hour, using great care. Each of our oars had a lanyard to it, which let it go down even with the water. We agreed to take an oar apiece, No. 21 to slip over the starboard, I over the larboard side.

"The tide was now running half ebb, and about two miles an hour. We dropped quietly into the water, cut our respective oars loose, and drifted away with the tide. The rain still fell in torrents, and a fresh breeze was blowing out of the harbor; but, as the line of ebb-tide passed close to the point, we calculated to reach it and not drift out to sea.

"No. 21 and myself kept together until after we lost sight of



the lighter's lanterns ; then we began to strike out for the point, which we were fast approaching.

"No. 21 said to me, 'That was my daughter that gave us the files. I told her before I left Paris to follow me.'

"'God bless her !' said L. 'Farewell, Pierre, until we meet again,' and I began to leave him.

"I was about one hundred yards ahead of him when I saw a light approaching from the direction of the harbor, and soon the hull and spars of a vessel loomed close to me. Her bow struck my oar, and I had just time to catch her chain bobstay, and was drawn along at a furious rate. I raised myself by main strength on to the bobstay, the foam of the vessel's bow coming up to my neck. 'Thank God !' I exclaimed, 'I am saved.'

"I now went to work to file off my waist-chain, which I did in the course of an hour, and was then free of all incumbrances.

"It was, as near as I could judge, three o'clock in the morning when I got rid of my irons. By this time the vessel had run at least sixteen miles. I intended to let her run until I was discovered, which would not probably be until seven o'clock ; 'then,' I argued, 'the ship will be at least sixty miles from Toulon, and will not turn back for the sake of delivering me up.' I was so exhausted, however, by cold and fatigue, that I found I must get on board the vessel if possible ; so I crawled in over the bow, and found the lookout fast asleep on his watch. There was a dim light forward, where the crew slept, and, looking down, I saw three men sound asleep in their berths.

"Nothing disturbs a sailor in his watch below, and I went down among the sleepers. I picked out the largest shirt and pair of pantaloons I could find and put them on ; I then put on a pair of shoes, a sou'wester, and an oil-skin coat, and, thus equipped, went on deck and threw my convict clothes overboard.

"As I came up from below the man at the bow said, 'Pepé, is it seven bells yet ?' 'No,' I replied. The lookout fell back under his tarpaulin and I moved aft cautiously.

"One man was leaning under the lee of the mainmast, one was at the helm, and two or three seemed to be asleep under the lee of the cuddy.

"I again went forward and tried the fore-hatch cover, and found I could lift it. Then I looked into the cook's caboose, and found there some hard bread and a piece of pork. The tea-kettle being on the galley ready for the morning breakfast, I took it along with

me, and descended with my plunder into the fore-hatch, hauled the cover over after me, and laid down on the cargo to sleep.

"Some time after I heard all hands called, and supposed it was half after seven. I congratulated myself that we were now at least seventy miles from Toulon, and that I would not be discovered for some time yet.

"I moved farther aft upon the cargo and breakfasted upon a part of my plunder. I remained in those close quarters for three days.

"And now, Myra," said Robert, pausing in his narrative, "you must be tired with this long story. After dinner I will tell you the rest. Of course, I have omitted many details, and must leave it to your imagination to fill them in."

"I am strangely interested," said Myra, "in all that you have told me. Oh, what misfortunes have followed you, and how bravely you have borne up against them! I hope you soon came to the end of your troubles."

"No, child," he replied, "only the beginning—but you shall know all. My life, I fear, is doomed to disappointments. I have not taken the right course to avoid them, but while I live you shall be my care. Now play something for me."

## CHAPTER XIII.

### ROBERT LE DIABLE CONCLUDES HIS STORY.

AFTER dinner Myra was anxious to have Robert continue the story of his life, and, taking his hand in hers, she led him to the parlor, where he resumed his narrative.

"At the end of the third day," said Robert, "a storm broke, which continued until morning. The night following, the hatches were left off, so as to prevent the cargo from heating, and I passed a more pleasant time than when everything was shut close, for the heat had been almost suffocating.

"After midnight, hearing no movement on deck, I put my head above the hatch to get more air. The vessel was nearly becalmed, moving at the rate of about a knot and a half an hour. Everybody was asleep except the man at the wheel, as is customary on board Mediterranean merchant-vessels.

"As there was no moon, I determined to risk going on deck. As near as I could judge, we were bound up the Mediterranean, perhaps to Malta, where, once on shore, I would be a free man. I could not consider myself free while on board a French vessel, for if the captain suspected me of being a convict he was bound to turn me over to the first French ship-of-war he met.

"Seeing a movement among the crew aft, I slipped below. I heard the steps of the men coming forward, and heard one of them say, 'I saw it standing right here, and it disappeared as if it went overboard.' 'I saw it too,' said another; 'it's a queer ghost that goes about stealing grub and clothes. I must tell the captain about it to-morrow.'

"'Ah!' thought I, 'I must be more careful.' The calm lasted two days more, and on the fourth day of our voyage the cook, coming down below for wood, detected me as I was lying on the cargo. He rushed on deck, and in less than a minute the rest of the crew were down to see who was there.

"'Come on deck and show yourself,' shouted the captain, and, finding it useless longer to attempt concealment, I came out.

"'There's my clothes,' said one; 'my sou'wester,' said another; 'my oil-skin coat,' said a third; 'and he's the man that took my kettle,' chimed in the cook.

"'Yes,' said I, 'I am the man—necessity knows no law.'

"'Where did you come from?' said the captain.

"'From Toulon,' I replied.

"'A convict by all that's holy!' exclaimed the captain. 'Seize him and tie him.' But the sailors did not seem anxious to obey. The big burly captain was the only one that appeared inclined to trouble me.

"'Look here, captain,' said I, 'I am no convict; only a poor sailor who wanted to see his mother in Malta. You will find me a good worker. I can hand, reef, and steer, and navigate into the bargain, and will help discharge cargo when we get into port.'

"The captain, finding his crew were not interested in delivering me up, at length said, 'Well, you will receive no wages, and will get a thrashing if you don't do your work well.' He was a brutal fellow, and used to frequently thrash his men, as I soon discovered.

"'All right,' said I, 'about the working part. As to the thrashing part, there are no four men on board this vessel that can do that.' The captain looked me all over, and, being, perhaps, of the

same opinion, walked away, the crew laughing at him in their sleeves.

“‘Bully for you!’ said the sailors. ‘It’s the first time old Beelzebub ever met his match.’ Then they took me forward and gave me a hearty breakfast.

“‘I did all the hard work on board that polacca—kept everybody’s lookout, steered nearly all the watches through, and was soon a universal favorite. Even the captain found no fault with me, although he eyed me in a surly manner that I did not like.

“‘We had rounded the Island of Sardinia, and Cape Bon was in sight. The wind was light, and it looked squally astern. It seems that the captain was intending to go into the Bay of Tunis, hoping to find a French ship-of-war there to which he could deliver me up, for he did not believe my story, and one of the men told me what he was going to do.

“‘At three o’clock the wind was very shifty and squally. All hands were sent aloft to reef topsails and furl light sails, the only persons on deck being the captain, the man at the wheel, and myself. Cape Bon was then about two miles off.

“‘I was hauling up the mainsail all by myself, when the squall struck the vessel. It was more than I could do to handle the sail, which was fluttering in the wind.

“‘‘You infernal lazy convict!’ cried the captain in a rage, ‘get that sail in or I’ll flog you. Take hold here with me,’ and he took hold of the clew-garnet to haul upon it. ‘Take hold at once, you lubber, or I’ll brain you.’

“‘I deliberately folded my arms and said, ‘I’ll work for no man that treats his crew like dogs. Your sail may go to pieces for what I care.’

“‘‘You are none of my crew, you vile convict,’ he howled, and, rushing at me, he aimed a blow at my head which I warded off, and the next moment he was lying senseless upon the deck.

“‘The man at the wheel rushed to the captain’s assistance, when I took him by the collar and tied his hands behind him. I then put the helm hard down, and the vessel flew up into the wind, throwing everything aback.

“‘There was a small dinghy hanging at the stern. It was but the work of a moment to lower her, and I was soon on my way to the shore, which was about a mile off.

“‘I knew the captain would not come to for some time, and

before the crew could get down from aloft I should be on shore in Africa, out of reach of French rule.

"Everything turned out as I expected. The wind being in my favor, I soon landed on the beach and hauled up my boat.

"I now strode up to the Plains of Carthage, and, looking seaward, the polacca seemed to be floundering about without any one to control her. The men were still aloft, trying to furl the sails, but the wind had increased to half a gale, and the vessel was too weak-handed for the men to handle the canvas without some one to guide her with the helm.

"I don't suppose the men on the yards even noticed the boat leave the polacca, and it looked to me as if the captain and the helmsman were still *hors de combat*. It was no business of mine, however, and I turned my face inland.

"Here," thought I, "am I standing on the site of the great city of Carthage, Rome's most formidable rival. For centuries it held the balance of power in the ancient world, which lost its most powerful counterpoise when Carthage fell."

"But where," I asked, "are the remains of the great city that once stood so majestically upon this plain, whose soldiers gave the Romans more trouble than all their other adversaries put together whose fleets carried terror all through the Mediterranean, and whose commerce covered the sea?"

"I could see nothing except a few mounds rising above the plain, and the remains of an aqueduct. I wandered on for several miles, until I came to some ruins of temples and tombs. Into one of the latter I descended, and found it a place where I could spend the night, and be secure from pursuit in case I was followed.

"A fire had lately been burning, and I found a broken crock partly filled with fresh water. I drank, and laid down to sleep.

"About daylight I was awakened by the noise of some animal rushing into the tomb and whining piteously. Looking up, I saw a young lioness, with a scarlet collar around her neck and part of a spear-handle sticking in her hip.

"I saw at once that it was a pet animal, perhaps the property of the Bey of Tunis, that had escaped and had been wounded by hunters.

"Going toward the lioness, I patted her on the head. She licked my hand. I then pulled the broken javelin from her side. It seemed to relieve the animal, which immediately commenced to lick the wound.

"I once more had a companion, and one that did not seem disposed to leave me.

"That evening I saw some Arab tents in the distance, and, as I was almost starving, I went toward them. I found a man tending a flock of sheep, and, making signs to him, he gave me a piece of meat, some black bread, and dates. I returned to the tomb and divided my meat with the lioness.

"That night the animal crawled quietly out of the tomb and disappeared, but in less than half an hour she returned with a lamb and laid it at my feet, licking the blood that came from its throat. So I was now provisioned for a siege.

"On the third day, about noon, I heard voices outside, and recognized that of the captain of the polacca. He had evidently gone into the goleta, anchored, and was now out hunting for me.

"'There are marks of blood on these steps,' said the captain. 'I'll go down and see what it means.' I stood close to the aperture, and as I did so the muzzle of a long musket protruded through the entrance, followed by the captain.

"I struck him a blow with my open hand. The gun went off, and he fell forward on his face. As he fell, the lioness struck him on the head with her paw. Then the animal uttered a frightful howl, and I heard the party outside scampering off. I looked out and saw three men running away, whom I recognized as belonging to the polacca.

"Finding this to be no longer a safe place, I stripped the captain's senseless body, put on his clothes, and went out of the tomb, followed by the lioness.

"I took the road to the beach, where some fishermen were hauling a seine, half a mile distant from the point where I struck it. Their boat was afloat near me, fastened by a rope to a stake. It was a fine fishing boat, with mast and sail up. I jumped into the boat without a moment's hesitation. The lioness followed, and we were soon going rapidly out of the bay, with a fresh wind.

"I was reduced to such straits to save my life that I never stopped to consider that I was depriving those poor people of the means of making a living. The hand of every man seemed to be against me, and I was hunted like a wild beast. Had those fishermen been notified that an escaped convict was concealed in the ruins of Carthage, they would have left their nets, even if full of fish, and joined in pursuit of me; such is the love of mankind for hunting each other down.

"In this respect man is more cruel than the brute creation. The latter hunt each other only when in want of food, and frequently display great courage in attacking animals of greater strength. But what courage is there in hunting a poor wretch escaping from a hideous bondage ?

"My conscience was soon quieted with regard to taking the boat. I carried on all sail, to lay as great a distance as possible between me and the goleta. I was the more induced to do this as I saw the polacca lying in port close to a French brig-of-war.

"No doubt the captain of the French brig had been informed of all the circumstances of my case, and would have sent his marines on shore to hunt for me amid the ruins of Carthage, but there were certain forms to be first gone through with. He had first to see the French consul-general, who must communicate with the prime minister, and then the prime minister must refer the matter to the bey—all proceedings that require much time and diplomacy in all Eastern countries, in this instance a fortunate circumstance for me.

"The last I saw of the fishermen they were hastening toward the goleta, three miles away, doubtless to procure another boat in order to pursue me. I calculated, however, that they could not start in pursuit in less than two hours, and by that time my sail would be out of sight below the horizon.

"At sundown I saw nothing in pursuit of me. I hoped by the morning to pass the south end of Sardinia and coast the shore of that island, so that, at a moment's notice of danger, I could beach the boat and take to the mountains, where I would be safe and be able in time to get on board some vessel bound to America, where I was determined to go if possible.

"On the afternoon of the second day a brig came in sight astern and rapidly gained on my boat. In four hours she was close alongside. She carried the American flag flying at the peak.

"A long, slab-sided Yankee, without coat or vest, sang out to me from the stern, 'Halloo ! Where yer bound ?'

"'I am in distress,' said I, 'and want to get aboard.'

"'Well, scoot her alongside and grab a rope, but don't miss it. My motto is never to stop for man or beast.'

"I sheered alongside, dropped the tiller, and made fast the rope to the forward thwart. Then a parley commenced. I invented a story, how my crew had run off with my vessel, had captured this fishing boat, put me and the lioness into it, and sailed away.

"Where are you bound?" I asked.

"To Rio Janeiro," said the skipper.

"That will suit me exactly," I said. "My fellows are bound for Montevideo, and I'll take the whole of them if I can find a French man-of-war in port."

"French, eh?" said the Yankee. "You speak tarnal good English for a frog-eater, but you don't think I'm goin' to take that critter aboard, do you?" pointing to the lioness.

"Yes, I do," said I, as I clambered up the side; and Aysha, as had named the lioness, after the Prophet's wife, jumped on board after me.

"Well, here's a kettle of fish," said the Yankee; 'boardin' an American vessel without permission! What'll Congress say to that? There'll be war with France in less than four months. But you are a whopper,' he continued; 'you'd do a lot of work, wouldn't you? I am short-handed, and intended to stop at Gibraltar and git two more men. What kin you do? Perhaps I needn't stop.'

"I can hand, reef, and steer," said I, 'and navigate, and can hoist out more cargo than any three men in your brig.'

"Then," said the captain, 'I needn't go into Gibraltar. Of course, you'll work your passage, and pay for the animal's feed when you get to Rio.'

"I'll tell you what I'll do," said I; 'you can have my boat, sails and all, for the animal's food—'

"And passage," said he. 'Haul up the mainsail, back main-ropesail, let go bowlines, ease off jib-sheet, down helm. I said that I never stopped for man or beast, but I do sometimes for a boat with a tarnal good sail in her. Get up yard and stay tackles. Here, kurnel'—speaking to me—'you and I histe one end and the crew the other. I wanted a launch, and this'll do until I can swap her off.'

"The boat was soon amidships, and we filled away again.

"The captain proceeded at once to business. 'My mate is dead,' he said. 'My second mate can't navigate; you can. If you'll take mate's berth, it's yourn, provided you'll do it on seaman's wages. Yes or no?'

"Yes," I replied.

"Well," said he, 'come and sign shippin' articles, mess along er me, *et cetera*.' I signed the papers, and was installed first officer of the brig Jasper, of Nantucket, Captain Abel Jewsharp.



"We ran out of the Straits of Gibraltar with a fine wind and steered for Madeira, where we stayed three days and took in a lot of wine for the Rio market. We were fifty-two days from the Straits to Rio, with fair winds and pleasant weather all the way.

"As we sailed into the beautiful harbor of Rio Janeiro, with its glorious mountains and broad sheet of water, my eyes were delighted with the sight of two American frigates, the Constitution and the Java. I felt that I was now under the protecting folds of the American flag, and that no one would dare molest me. But how little I knew of these things!

"As soon as we anchored, the captain went on shore to take his papers to the consul. During his absence the captain of an American brig, the Belle, came on board to see if he could purchase any wine. He told me he should sail next day for New York, and I engaged to go with him as mate.

"When Captain Jewsharp returned on board I informed him of the arrangement I had made with the captain of the Belle.

"'What in thunder will I do?' said Captain Jewsharp. 'Here hev I bin supportin' you and givin' you a free passage, and treatin' you like a lord, an' you desert me the first occasion that offers. That's as much as I could expect from a frog-eating Frenchman.'

"'That remark decides the matter,' said I. 'I'm not a Frenchman.'

"'Then you told me a tarnal lie,' he answered. 'Well, you may go. There's as good fish in the sea as ever came out of it. I'll git a mate that'll give you six an' beat you. Git out the wine while I go ashore,' and off he started.

"He returned in half an hour and told me to go on shore with him to the consul's and sign the necessary papers. When we reached the mole I noticed a dozen soldiers marching toward us. Two policemen suddenly stepped forward, seized me, and put on hand and foot irons.

"I was completely taken by surprise; but it would have been death to me to have resisted a file of soldiers with loaded muskets. I did not understand the matter at all, but still supposed I was going before the American consul.

"'How do you like that?' said Abel Jewsharp. 'It ain't the first time you've been in irons. You're the feller that escaped from Toulon when I was there. I knew yer by the mark on yer arm, which I saw yesterday when yer had yer sleeves rolled up. You'll

to go back to the galleys, as they've an extradition treaty here with France.'

"I was too horrified to speak. I was conducted by my guard to the police department, and there I was arraigned, examined, and condemned, without evidence and without an opportunity of a trial."

"O heavens!" exclaimed Myra, bursting into tears, "what a trial! and I was so happy thinking you would soon be in New York, under the American flag."

"The American flag!" said Robert, with contempt. "I saw an American midshipman, with cocked hat and dirk on, going down the deck of his boat, and sang out to him, 'Tell your captain they are carrying to prison an American citizen who has committed no offense.' But I got for this was a shower of blows from the muskets of the soldiers."

"I believe some inquiry was made in the matter by the consul, but he was pleased to be satisfied with the police report that I was an escaped French convict, who had committed murder, and that my description had been sent to Rio by the French police authorities."

"My clothes were stripped off after I left the police court, and I was put into a convict's dress and heavily chained, for the report from France represented me as the most herculean and brutal of men."

"After being in prison about six hours only I was marched out and put with a gang of convicts, the worst-looking set of wretches I ever laid eyes on."

"I was labeled No. 36, the number I bore at Toulon. My companion was an old man who wept all the time."

"We were bound for the diamond mines, two hundred miles distant from Rio. To tell you all the sufferings I endured marching under a tropical sun would be impossible. But I never let my companions see that I suffered, or exhibited the least impatience."

"I helped the poor old man by my side along as well as I could, but on the sixth day out he fell dead. After that I had no companion, but extra chains were put on me."

"We were fifteen days marching two hundred miles, and finally arrived at the diamond mines, worn out with fatigue. Five of our number died on the journey."

"The wretched-looking country to which we were taken beggars description. The sun poured down all day long, when it did

not rain, and the corral or pen we lived in was not even fit for beasts. But I can not give an account of all I suffered ; it would fill a book.

"I was here chained to a man who had worked in the mines six years, and had only one year to serve. Few that are sent to these mines live as long as that. Only think how men have to suffer in procuring the diamonds with which women adorn themselves ! They are not worth the blood and money they cost.

"My new companion turned out to be as agreeable a person as one could expect under the circumstances. He was an accomplished mineralogist, who had been sent to the mines for some political offense, and his conversation made the days pass less wearily.

"The officers and soldiers at the mines that guarded the convicts were all there for punishment. The only independent person was the government agent, who received a large salary, and dominated over everybody. It was not a happy community, and a man sentenced to the mines had better jump over the first precipice he comes to than to serve his term. A release seldom comes except by death.

"The man to whom I was chained had a retreat to which he resorted every day after labor was over. It was under the lee of a large rock shaded by trees. Here we sat in leisure moments day after day, the old man imparting to me varied and useful information. I always felt sorry when the guard ordered us into the corral.

"Three weeks after our acquaintance commenced the old mineralogist fell ill, and I attended him like a brother. He was still chained to me, but I did all the work, for which he was very grateful.

"On the third day of his illness we sat down, after we had returned from work, in our accustomed place under the shade of the rock. For a long time my companion was silent. At length he spoke :

"'My young friend,' said he, 'I feel that I can not live long. I did hope to serve out my term and get away from here, but the government always imposes a term through which no man can live. You are of such strength that you may be able to endure it, and finally get away. I therefore desire that you shall benefit by my gains, for, although I have been closely watched, I have succeeded in accumulating great wealth. The ground we are now sitting on

contains all my findings that I have secreted from time to time. Three feet under the flat stone on which I am sitting are diamonds worth thousands of dollars. You need not attempt to secure any from the diggings. That would probably bring you under suspicion and get you in trouble. There is hardly a single convict here that has not at some time been detected in secreting valuable stones and been severely punished for it. Gain the confidence of the brutes in command, and they will not watch you closely. When I am dead, all this buried wealth is yours when you are liberated, as I trust you will be. Come here at the last moment and secure the diamonds. You will remember, I trust, the old man in the days of your prosperity, and breathe a sigh to his memory.'

"I pressed his hand, and nothing more was said. Three days later he died. I was truly grieved, and shed tears. The commandant was touched with my grief, and allowed me to bury my companion in a substantial coffin constructed by myself. As I had always conducted myself with propriety, I was not chained to any one after the old man's death.

"I worked hard in the mines and secured a great number of diamonds, and, what was unusual, never attempted to conceal any, which caused me to be trusted more and more. My life glided along then with less hardship, if not more pleasantly.

"One day, on my return from work, an English naval officer, who was visiting the mines, passed near me. I said suddenly to him, 'Will you please inform the United States consul at Rio that an American citizen is confined here for no crime, and that it is his duty to procure my release?'

"'Say you are an Englishman,' he replied, 'and I'll take you back with me. What a shame that these blackguards should keep a man like you at this kind of work! What a captain of a top you'd make! I'm up here with authority to take away any Britisher I may find who will serve in his Majesty's navy.'

"'Thank you, sir,' said I, 'but I am an American, and must come out of this as an American. Could you not mention me to the captain of the Constitution?'

"'Yes, I will,' he said; 'but better say you are an Englishman, and we'll have you out at once, or knock Rio down with our guns.'

"I thanked the officer again, and he walked away.

"Three weeks after that an order came for my liberation. As

no order had been sent from France for my extradition, the authorities at Rio were glad to get out of trouble for taking an American citizen out of an American vessel. The commandant was directed to treat me with consideration. My clothes were sent to me, and once more I was a free man. I was even given a room in the barracks while I remained at the mines, which, of course, was not long.

"At night I visited the spot where the old mineralogist had concealed his treasure, and below the rock, as he had told me, I found eight large diamonds. I had no time to examine the stones, but concealed them about my person. As I was now exempt from search, I had little apprehension of further trouble.

"Eight days afterward I reported myself to the consul at Rio, who told me that a British officer had reported my condition to him, and spoken of the handsome manner in which I had behaved in refusing to be liberated except as an American. The British admiral told the consul if he didn't have me liberated he would demand me as a British subject; and, said he, 'if they don't give him up I'll send my marines up there to fetch him.' The American commodore also put in a demand, and, in consequence, I was free once more, privileged to go where I pleased.

"At Rio I locked the door of my room at the hotel and examined my diamonds. I had learned enough from the mineralogist to know their approximate value. The two larger I judge worth at least fifteen thousand dollars each, and the others from three to ten thousand apiece—in all, some seventy-five thousand dollars.

"I was overjoyed at my windfall, but I could not help thinking of the poor old man who had worked in vain for six long years to accumulate this wealth.

"I sewed all the stones in the lining of my coat, except the smallest one, which, the next day, I carried to a diamond-store and submitted to the proprietor's inspection.

"He offered me eighteen hundred dollars for it, which I concluded to accept. A day or two afterward I sailed for London in a fast-sailing British ship.

"To make a long story shorter, I sold all my stones in the rough, in London, for seventy-two thousand dollars. The dealer said they might be worth more, but he had to run some risk in the cutting.

"I was very anxious to get to America, and soon after took pas-

sage in a Liverpool packet, and, when I landed in New York, felt for the first time thoroughly secure from French tyranny.

"I had no sooner landed than I began the search for my pet lioness Aysha, for I knew that Captain Jewsharp would convert her into cash as soon as he reached New York.

"One day I entered a circus in the outskirts of the city. In one part of the tent were some cages of animals, and a lioness that had been lying down jumped up on seeing me and began to howl. I recognized Aysha at once, but so altered! She was all skin and bone, and her eyes had a fierce, lurid expression. I walked up to the cage, put my hand in, and Aysha licked it with joy.

"'Stranger,' said the keeper to me, 'you are very rash. I wonder that animal didn't tear your arm off. She's the most devilish critter we have in the show.'

"'Open the cage-door and let me go in,' said I. 'I will show you how easy it is to manage her.'

"'Not for the world,' said the keeper. 'We never allow any one to go near her. She will turn on you before you know it, unless you have the power of controlling animals that I don't possess.' All this time Aysha was licking my hand through the bars of her cage.

"'It beats all,' said the keeper, 'how that animal acts toward you. Here is the key, if you think you can go in without risking your life.'

"I went into the cage and sat down. Aysha crawled up to me and laid her head in my lap, testifying in every way her joy at seeing me. Then I opened the cage-door and Aysha followed me out, the keeper and all hands running away in terror. Presently, finding the animal was quiet and that it obeyed all my commands, the keeper came back.

"'This lioness is my property,' said I. 'She was stolen from me. What will you take for her?'

"'Nine hundred dollars,' said the keeper, 'is the price we paid for her to a ship-captain.'

"'Yes,' said I, 'Abel Jewsharp, who stole her from me. Well, I will give you what you paid for her.'

"'Take her,' said the man; 'she is no use to us. We can't manage her, and you can.' That's the way I regained possession of Aysha.

"Soon after this incident I purchased this house. The rest you know. So now, my child, my story is ended. I have only to say that I am engaged in enterprises that will either make or break me.

I may be utterly ruined, and again thrown back by adversity into many of the horrors through which I have passed before.

"I forgot to mention that a year after I settled here I sent Walter to Paris with a letter to my old landlord of La Fame, with a request that he would send me all my effects. I told him how I had escaped, and that I was doing well and was happy. In reply I received a letter congratulating me, and giving me one piece of news that quite staggered me. It was that the Count of Montebello and the marchioness were married in less than a year after the murder of the marquis.

" 'My God !' I said, 'I see it all now.' I was the tool and the victim of these murderers. I determined to be revenged. I saw that from the very first the count had inveigled me into the meshes of the net, and how adroitly he had managed to fix the murder upon me. I remembered how those steel-gray eyes of the marchioness would glitter when she clasped my hand in hers in lover-like fashion, while she doubtless said to herself, 'O fool ! I am sacrificing you to the man I love, and your head shall fall by the axe, or your youth be spent in the hulks, while my love and I enjoy the fruition of our hopes far out of reach of your revenge.'

"There never was a case of murder where the perpetrators completely succeeded in fixing the crime on another. Not a single doubt ever entered the mind of any one that the marchioness and count had anything to do with it. On the contrary, the marchioness had the sympathy of all Paris.

"The old landlord informed me that the world of fashion was somewhat shocked at a marriage made so suddenly, considering the grief exhibited by the widow at her husband's death ; but the marchioness gave a grand entertainment that eclipsed anything that had been seen before in the gay city. People applauded, and said : 'Ah, she is divine ! Her house will be even more charming than it was in the time of the marquis, who was, it must be confessed, an old dolt that did not appreciate his charming wife.'

"I wonder what Paris will say when I bring these murderers to the scaffold or to the galleys ! The Count of Montebello, no doubt, did the deed with his own hand, after the wife had stupefied her husband with drugs.

"I shall devote my life and fortune to bringing these two wretches to justice, but I can not return to Paris at present, nor have I yet sufficient money to carry out my plans. It is this

money I am working for now that causes me to lead a life of mystery. And I may fail in my object after all.

"From my earliest recollection, the world has been hard upon me. Where I have performed kind actions I have been rewarded with ingratitude; where I have given love I have encountered treachery in return. I have never had sympathy extended to me from any quarter. In my intercourse with the outside world I have found nothing but avarice and dishonesty, and among my most intimate acquaintances there is no one to whom I would trust my interests."

"Would you not trust me?" said Myra, raising her tearful eyes to his. "I would sacrifice my life for you."

"Of course, my child," said Robert, "I would trust you in every way. But you are not my outside world; you are my guardian angel, and when I am about to engage in what people might call unlawful acts I think of your innocent face, and the thought stays my hand."

"But, Myra, you may as well know the worst of me. My life is a reckless one. How could it be otherwise, considering the circumstances of my history? My hand is against the rich, that I may help the poor. If I perform a good action to-day, I mar it to-morrow by doing something not in consonance with the laws of society; and I help the poor with the gold I squeeze from the grip of the purse-proud money-maker. Although you have known me only as the benevolent Mr. Robert, who is always helping the oppressed, you must know me also as one who strips the rich to enable me to carry on my benevolence."

Myra looked at him wonderingly. "I do not understand," she said, "nor do I want to. I know no one so good as you, and I could not be made to believe that you would ever do anything that would bring a blush to your cheek."

"Perhaps not, Myra," he replied. "The cheek may be too hardened to blush; but, child, let me always have your affection, no matter what I may be," and Robert stooped and kissed her brow, over which the rich blood mantled as she felt the pressure of his lips.

"And now, Myra," he said, "I must to business, for I have much to do before I go away to-night. I have devoted many hours to giving you an outline of my life up to the time I arrived in New York. It is better you should not know all that has since occurred. If in the future you hear of acts at which your nature revolts, remember that I have much to forgive in the world, and



that it must pay the penalty for the cruelty it has practiced upon me.

"Now send Walter to me in the paneled room. I sent word to him to meet me here at this hour."

Myra arose and went to comply with Robert's request, her innocent face full of wonder at all she had heard.

Robert le Diable was waiting in the paneled room when a young man neatly dressed entered and bowed low.

"How are you, Walter?" said Robert, extending his hand, which the youth took respectfully.

"Well, thank you, sir. All your orders have been carried out."

"Sit down and tell me all," said Robert.

"You see, all this paneled work, sir, looks just as it did. I hired the man you told me of, and kept him here while he did the work, bringing him here blindfolded at night, and using the same precaution when he went away. I saw him on board the schooner bound for Porto Rico, and he signed a contract not to return for two years, I paying him one thousand dollars.

"Here, sir, are three closets apparently with shelves twenty-two inches deep and thirty inches wide. By touching this knob the closet will descend to the walled room below, which has no apparent outlet but the door of which you know. This square of floor near the window, set in so neatly no one could detect it, rises on touching a spring, and steps are revealed leading to the cellar. You see that one in this room has the choice of four different ways of leaving it. I have seen the captain of the schooner and given him your orders. Nimble is waiting below, sir, until you want to see him."

"All right," said Robert, "you have done well. Now, Walter, I want to inquire how your wooing with Myra progresses?"

"Ah, sir!" replied the young man, "very poorly. I fear Myra will never cast her eyes upon me in other than a sisterly fashion. When I speak to her of love it pains her, and she asks me to desist. I love her too much to make her feel uncomfortable."

"Well, patience, Walter," said Robert. "Rome was not built in a day. You may win in the end. If anything happens to me, you will be Myra's only protector. When I go away I confide her to your care. God knows if I shall ever return here. Remember, Walter, all that I have done for you, and try and return it by your care for Myra if anything happens to me."

"I shall never forget what you have done for me," said Wal-

ter. "How could I forget the time when I was arrested as a thief, and you gave bonds for me, secured me counsel, and not only cleared me of the charge, but fixed it upon the proper person? You have supported me and my poor sick mother ever since, and my life will always be at your service. Words, sir, can never express my thanks; but, independently of the duty I owe to you, I would die to serve Myra."

"Then," said Robert, "I shall feel comforted when I leave her. Myra may still come to look upon you in a different light, and she is a girl worth waiting for. Now send Nimble to me."

Presently an odd-looking lad with a queer old face appeared. The new-comer, who was dressed in a blue suit, was of so slight a figure that it seemed as if one could span his waist with his hand.

He knelt and kissed his master's hand. "I longed so to see you, Master Robert," he said. "I thought you'd never send for me."

"Everything in time, Nimble. But how gets on the schooling?"

"Well, sir," replied the boy, "I don't think even you would find fault with me. I stand head in all my classes, and that's saying a good deal for one that you picked up starving in the streets eighteen months ago, and who then scarcely knew how to read."

"Well, Nimble," said Robert, "I have sent for you to give you some instructions before I go away. In case you hear of my getting into trouble you must find me. I leave that to your instinct. Here in this little secret closet"—and he touched a knob in the panel, causing a door to fly open—"you will find a strong malleable wire with a bullet attached, so that it can be thrown up to a window. In this bundle is a tiny file and saw for cutting iron. When you find where I am, get these to me, and, if you receive a message from me, come wherever I am, and with several disguises. Remember what I have taught you from time to time, and be cautious how you proceed. Now, good-night."

"I understand," said the boy, who, knowing Robert le Diable's humor, left the room.

That evening Robert spent with Myra, but at eleven o'clock he said, "Now, my child, I must leave you, and may not see you for some time."

Myra burst into tears. Robert embraced her fondly, and left her weeping upon the sofa. As he passed Aysha, the lioness whined. He patted her head and went into the paneled room.

Here he armed himself with a double-barreled pistol and a knife. Touching a spring in the panel, a door opened, and he stepped out into the street.

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## CHAPTER XIV.

### THE MYSTERIOUS ASSEMBLY.

IN the center of a row of houses in Pine Street there stood an old brick building that had the appearance of being uninhabited. Cobwebs hung around the closed shutters, and the heavy hinges of the door were covered with rust. It did not look like a house to rent. Next door to it was a smaller house of a little more modern appearance, but far from inviting. This place was used as an eating-house by one Hans Hammel, a German, whose sign appeared over the front door.

It was sundown. The street-lamps were not yet lighted, and the lamps in Hans Hammel's establishment were not very numerous nor very brilliant. The house looked as if it were only frequented by common wayfarers only, yet on the evening of the question, which was the night following the one in which Robert Le Diable left home, it appeared to be occupied by a goodly number of people of different sexes.

As a person entered the house the burly proprietor welcomed him, "Will you haf shops mit brod ant putter, or eks mit for dat's all ter ish. Effery potty likes dem zhrimp."

If the answer was "eks mit zhrimp," Hans Hammel would lead the speaker into the next room, where he would ascend a low wooden stairway until he reached the room above, which contained painted pine tables, the tableware and other furnishings of the commonest description.

Only one guest at a time was admitted to this private room, and he or she was blindfolded by the waiter, led into a closet placed face to the wall. The closet would then revolve on wheels, and the occupant would presently find himself in another room, in the company with others that had arrived before. This performance seemed to be understood by all, yet no one knew where he or she had got into the room.

A detective would hardly have discovered the contrivance.

in appearance there was a closet on each side, containing a lot of bottles and other rubbish.

The room into which persons were thus introduced had all the shutters closed and was lighted by two dim oil-lamps. The women present wore thick veils, and the men had their faces covered. All were apparently strangers to each other and known only to the chief, who sat at a small table at the end of the room. Back of him were four other persons, also disguised.

The room, which was in the old house we have formerly mentioned, was once used for merchandise. It was some fifty feet long by thirty wide. At the lower end of the apartment were benches where persons entering could sit in obscurity, no one recognizing them.

The man at the table had a large nose, a red face, and a long, white beard. A pair of huge blue goggles added a little to his personal appearance. A dark gown, like that of a judge, covered him from head to foot. The four satellites in his rear were equipped in somewhat similar fashion.

At seven o'clock the chief of the society (for a society it evidently was) broke the silence. "Connect the bell and post the guard," said he. "Come forward, No. 6."

A woman of uncertain age advanced to the table. A thick curtain was dropped behind her, so that she was cut off entirely from the outside. "Speak," said the chief.

"Here are the house-keys," she said. "You can take impressions, and I can return them by nine o'clock. The silver is in the dining-room closet, top shelf. There are some bank-notes in the library-desk. There is no jewelry in the house, most of the family being away."

The keys were handed to the four men, who, after taking impressions in wax, returned them to the woman.

"What is the number of the house?" said the man with the white beard.

"No. 67 Bowling Green," said the woman.

"That will do," said the man. "There are your instructions," handing her a paper in cipher. "Now go home." She was then blindfolded behind a screen which hid the closet-door, and pivoted out. As she passed through the dining-room Hans Hammel inquired, "How you like dem zhrimp? All der gals likes dem." The woman made no reply, but disappeared through the door into the street.

"Come forward, No. 9," said the man in the white beard. A young man advanced to the table.

"Well, what news?" said the chief.

"A rope-ladder will be let down from the second story, back window, of Wiseman & Co.'s jewelry store at twelve o'clock to-morrow night. The man on watch will be drugged, and after ten o'clock will know nothing."

"All right," said the chief; "you have done well and may go." He made some notes with a pencil as the man was pivoted out.

When the man got down-stairs Hans Hammel asked him, "How you like dem zhrimp, vich effry potty likes?" The man went into the street without replying.

"No. 10," said the chief.

A girl of slight figure tripped up to the table. "I am sorry to tell your honor," said she, "that K. W. is under suspicion of taking Mrs. Ruggles's diamonds. His room has been shadowed by a new detective—a man of seventy, who understands his business. The K. W. had been away a week or so, they thought in the house. They cleaned up and dusted the room every day except the day after the robbery."

"Involuntary contribution, if you please," said the chief.

"I beg your honor's pardon," said the girl, "but the last night on which he came in with a night-key he smoked a cigar in the room and left the ashes on the mantel, which the detective saw and made a note of. He changed his collar and his boots, and the old man questioned me so closely that I became nervous, and he saw that I was trying to fool him. That afternoon I mailed a letter for the K. W., putting him on his guard. The same day the landlady hired another girl to help me with the work, but she is a fool and I don't think the landlady suspects anything."

"That shows how easily you can be gulled," said the chief. "The landlady is in league with the detective, and the girl is there to shadow you. This is serious. I always knew that K. W. was a fool and would get us into trouble. Notify him not to hide, if there is no evidence against him, but go back to the house and put on a bold front. He got the diamonds, you say?"

"Yes, sir, them's all safe, and no one but me knows she has 'em, for she never wore 'em but once, and then I helped dress her."

"Well, go now," said the chief, "and shadow the new girl."

"La me!" said No. 10, "to think that there girl should be so artful when she looks as if butter wouldn't melt in her mouth!"

And Jane Ross, *alias* No. 10, whisked off, to be saluted by Hans Hammel as she passed through the dining-room.

"No. 11," called out the chief, and a stout man of perhaps thirty-six years of age walked up.

"Well, sir," said he, "I have dug under the vault of the Hudson Bank and have cut away the floor until I can see the bottom of the strong box. It will be ready to crack at midnight day after to-morrow. I hired the house next door for a month at a hundred dollars rent."

"Cheap, if we get the swag in the vault. There ought to be at least a hundred thousand there," said the chief as he made a note. "How about the watchman inside?"

"He'll drink with me an hour before he goes on watch," said No. 11, "and an hour afterward will be so sound asleep that no ordinary noise will wake him."

"Well, good-night," said the chief. "They'll think that the Vandusen affair will keep us shady for a time, so we shan't be watched so closely. Good-night; be on time. Take No. 13 with you, and bring me the swag as soon as you secure it. Fill up the hole from the next house if you have time, so as to show as little trace of your work as possible." The man passed out.

"Ah! yer likes dose zhrimp?" said Hans. "I never see der man vot wasn't."

"No. 14," said the chief, and an old man walked to the table. "Well, watchman, what of the night?"

"Here, sir," said No. 14, "are the keys of the front and side doors of the house in Church Street. Mr. Carr gives a party three nights from now. I go on watch at twelve. The girl as tends the front door gave me the keys. She must have them by ten o'clock. Take the impressions and let me go. The silver's in an iron chest in the dining-room. They keep a small dog in the house."

"Bother the dog," interrupted the chief. "Tell the girl to give it this pill at nine o'clock. It will make him sleepy and stupid, so that he won't trouble us. What is your number?"

"No. 715 Battery," said the night-watchman, "and, your honor, there's no flour in the barrel and no molasses in the jug, and the young ones are piping. My row of houses only pays me fifteen dollars a month, and I can't live on that."

"Here's a month's pay for you," said the chief, "and you'll get more if we are successful. Good-night." And the watchman, like the rest, was pivoted off.

Mr. Hammel addressed him as he went out : " Ah ! dose zhrimp done makes yer sick, eh ? Vell, eat some more, an' dose zhrimp vill makes yer feel petter as goot ; effry potty, olt an' young, likes dem."

" Step up, No. 15," said the chief.

A respectable-looking old woman took her stand at the table.

" Well, Mrs. Marsh, I know you have good news for me."

" Hush, for God's sake ! Don't mention my name," said the old woman. " No. 15, if you please. Missus has just received a beautiful box of diamonds from Paris, price twenty thousand dollars ; I heard her say so ; but I'll have to drug the whole family to get them. Missus sleeps in the front room over the hall. The diamonds are in the top drawer of her bureau, No. 690 Broadway ; here's the front-door key." An impression of the key was taken and the old woman dismissed.

" Ah !" said Hans, " yer looks as if yer eats all dose zhrimp yerself ; effry potty loves dem zhrimp."

No. 20, a stout lad of sixteen, now came forward.

" Well, my plum," said the chief, " how do the cherries hang ?"

" Ripe, sir," answered the boy, " and ready to pick. I shall sleep in the broker's office five nights from this, and will drug myself at ten o'clock. You can enter then, as the door will be unlocked with marks of pincers on the key. You must shoot the bolt. There is at least ten thousand dollars in the strong-box. I have two heavy horse-blankets ready for your men to work under. They must tie and gag me, but see that I'm left room to breathe. I give our watchman a bottle of whisky, and he'll be drunk asleep before eleven o'clock."

" You are a trump," said the chief ; " nothing could be better planned."

" I will drive two small pins where the bolts are," said the boy, " so that your men will have no trouble in locating them."

" Good-night," said the chief ; but, as the boy hesitated and twisted his hat about in his hand, the chief handed him a five-dollar note.

" I wouldn't ask it, yer honor," said he, " but I promised the gals to take 'em to the theatre to-morrow night."

As he passed out old Hans said, " Oh ! little poy, I can see dose zhrimp stickin' out effry part off yer potty. You'll be sick ef you eats too much off dem zhrimp."

" Come forward, 21 and 22," said the chief, and two respectable-looking girls went behind the screen.

"Well, girls, what good news have you?"

"You like to have got us into a mess, sticking your red wafer on the door," said one of them. "You mustn't do it again. Stick it on the next house, and we will see it. Old Sneaker swore it was a signal from our beaus, and he wouldn't let us go out the whole evening. So we stayed in, and saw the head clerk put five thousand dollars in the cash-box. It will be too late to put it into the bank till Monday. So you must get it to-morrow night, or you may not get it at all. We stay there four nights in succession, and Eek, the shop-boy, stays there with us. He's awful fond of raspberry jam, and we have promised him some; and if you'll give us a powder to mix with the jam that will put him to sleep, you can come and go as you please. We'll unlock the door for you, and you'll have no trouble."

"All right, girls—the number?"

"No. 460 Grand Street. And now, sir, if you please, we'd like a little spending money; we only gets four dollars a month wages."

"There's ten apiece for you," said the chief, noting down something on paper. "Good-night, and don't squeak."

As the girls went through the dining-room, Hans, who was half asleep, yawned and said, "Ah! mine prittish gals, yer eats dose lovely shrimp to-night mit a goot digestion. You look ash 'appy ash a chile mit der piece off merlasses canty."

So the proceedings went on until nearly eleven o'clock, when Nos. 41, 42, and 43 were called, and up stepped three strapping fellows.

"Ha, my artful dodgers!" said the chief, "you look kennish. What say you?"

"Well, sir," said the spokesman, "this has been a slow job, but we have surveyed the premises and hooked the fish. We have been doing work for Morton, the banker, for three days, strengthening the wall in the rear of his strong-box. We put in cement that won't harden for a long time, so we can pick out the stones when we want to. The head clerk sleeps in the bank with loaded pistols. We have arranged with him to let us get through the wall, but we are to iron and gag him. He assures us that there's nearly fifty thousand dollars in the vault, an impression of the key of which we got from the clerk, and had a brass one made. But we are to see that the clerk gets ten thousand of the loan. How will that do, sir?"

"Pretty well, only ten thousand is too much. Half that



amount would have been enough. The clerk's salary is only a thousand a year, and he has no hope of advancement. He has served Morton eight years in the capacity of chief clerk, and is greatly trusted. 'What fools we mortals be.' A few hundred dollars a year added to his pay, and that man would have been honest. Morton could have well afforded to increase his salary, since he has made thousands for the bank. That's the way with rich people. They fairly suck the life-blood out of their dependents, who have families to provide for, and spend in one night the salary of three or four clerks in entertaining each other. Let them suffer. Take charge of the job, you three, and put it through."

Now that the women were all gone, there remained in the room ten men of different ages. They took the veils from their faces and stood revealed to each other.

The chief took out his notes and gave to each his allotted work, and said: "I want all those cribs cracked without fail. Now go, one after another, and don't let more than two be seen together in the street."

After these men had departed there were left only the chief and the four persons who sat behind him. The chief turned to them and said: "Cracking Morton's crib will make an awful stir, he is so powerful. He will spend fifty thousand dollars, if necessary, to find out who has borrowed from him. Indeed, the whole city will be in a buzz if we succeed in all we have undertaken. This arrest of K. W. bothers me. He will prattle, I fear. We must shadow him. Who will undertake it?"

"I will," spoke up a small man, "and spike his tallow if I find him sneaking."

"That is well," said the chief. "Now let us come to a conclusion as to what is to be done with the man in the box there. He has been seen sailing in company with English Charley, who evidently thinks he is going to get something out of him. Shall I send him to the schooner and settle with him there?"

"Yes," said they all in chorus, "and God help him when Mercy gets his grip upon him."

"That's settled, then," said the chief; "now let us scatter. I must be at my rooms by twelve o'clock, ready to lay out my work in the morning."

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AND  
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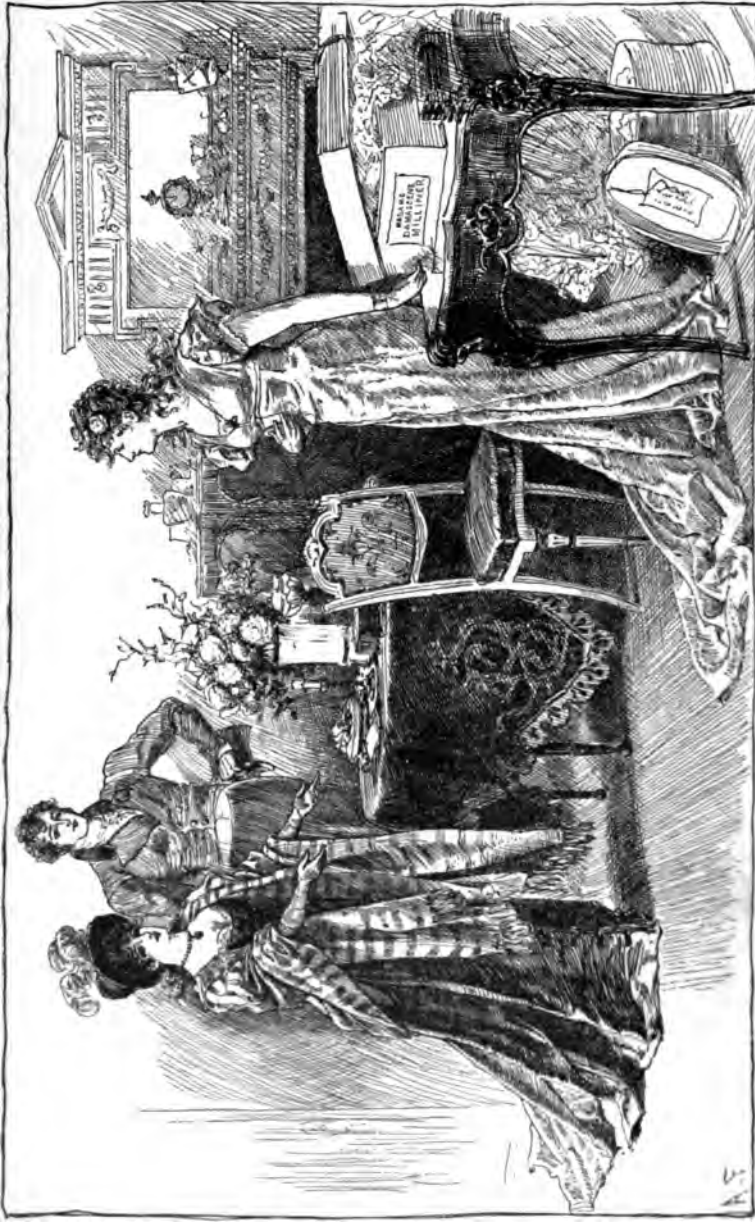
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Just then came a knock at the door, and Flossy, hastily thrusting her later acquisitions into the box, called out, "Come in," and in walked Mrs. Eton and Mr. Deville.

## CHAPTER XV.

## ALLAN DARE SCORES A SUCCESS.

WHEN the members of the mysterious assembly, described in the last chapter, departed from the old building in Pine Street, the chief paused to leave some orders with Hans in regard to the man in the box, to whom reference had been made.

The night was dark, and the street-lamps threw a dim light upon objects near them, while those a little remote were wrapped in gloom. The old watchmen had nearly all slipped off into boozing dens, where they might be seen drinking away what little sense nature had furnished them.

Occasionally our acquaintances of the secret loft would come across a watchman seated on a cellar-door, with his dim lantern by his side, taking all the comfort he could get on such an uncomfortable perch. These were of a class who had no money to spend in drinking dens, and so they served as landmarks to rogues; although, to tell the truth, the latter bothered themselves little about them.

It is likely that, out of the fifty people that entered Hans Hammel's house, not a single one was noticed by a watchman. Had any stray guardian of the night lounged into Hans Hammel's, that worthy would have clasped him in his arms and said, "Mine tear frent, how you vos now? Mein Gott! but I vos glat ter she yer," and he would have taken him to the cellar, where a good fire was burning, and have soon put him to sleep over a mug of ale—just enough drugged to quiet him effectually.

No one of the fraternity of watchmen ever dreamed that Hans's establishment was a den of robbers, although they often dropped in of a night to drink a mug of beer, feeling sure they would not be called upon to pay for it.

"No, no," said the generous Hans, "I neffer sharge der prave garchens off der proberthy off der beeples nottin'—mein Gott, no! Vot you dinks I vos—a prute? Trink as mush as yer likes, vich yer'll find petter as goot. All I shall asksh is jusht loog out a leetle for mein proberthy—not too mush, for, mein Gott! dose rop-pers der dinks if der sees yer here too mush Hans Hammel got monish, an' dose roppers might zhoot yer."

So Mr. Hans Hammel had everything his own way, so far as the

watchmen were concerned. He would go down to the little cellar, and, walking on tiptoe, his finger on his lips—"Hist!" he would say. "Mein Gott! be carefult. Dose shentlemans ub stairsh eatin' dose zhrimp vich effery potty likes mush nod see yer, der garchens off der proberty off der skidershins. Trink ant pe'appy, bud makes no noish, ant ven yer goesh, valk ub der shellar steb; yer are save mit me."

So the old watchmen, after enjoying their mugs of ale, would steal out and discuss on some convenient door-steps the virtues of Hans Hammel.

"The most whole-souled citizen of New York," one would say.

"Yes," another would affirm, "the watchman's best friend; his loss would be a public calamity."

"Ah, God forbid that anything should happen to him! We must look out for his property." So this rendezvous of burglars being under the especial protection of the police, it was hardly possible for any one to find out what was going on within.

Notwithstanding all the visitors to the rendezvous were linked together in crime, the chief took special pains that none of them should be able to point out the room in which the assembly met.

After the members were blindfolded the waiter led them around the room through the door and back, with an occasional caution to mind the door and not to strike themselves, until he put them in the closet, where they were pivoted into the assembly-room. The same ceremony was repeated on their return. No one suspected the location of the room, or supposed it to be adjoining the one where they were blindfolded. They thought it in some distant part of the house.

No one knew the chief except as they saw him at the assembly. If they had met him on the street in ordinary dress they would never have suspected it was he. Even the four principal confederates did not know him except under some disguise. He always came first to the rendezvous and put on his disguise, and was the last to leave. The whole scheme was well calculated to deceive a police force such as New York possessed in those days.

Here, then, were planned those mysterious robberies that had for so long baffled the authorities of the city. All classes of the community seemed to be represented at the meetings; and, in many cases, persons there were driven to become thieves from the fact that while their employers were rolling in wealth they received only the most niggardly wages.

These remarks are not intended as an apology for crime, but as a warning to those who are amassing millions from the labors of the poor. Let them remember that, while they are rolling in luxury and free from temptation, the poor are obliged to live from hand to mouth, with temptation staring them constantly in the face.

When people have all they want, there is no reason why they should yield to temptation; but there are thousands of reasons why they should be tolerant of the poor wretches whom they have driven to crime by their own meanness.

This applies particularly in our day to the great monopolists and speculators, who, by means of their wealth, are enabled to enact laws making the rich richer and the poor poorer. How seldom do we hear of any legislation for the benefit of the working classes, who are obliged to take what their employers choose to give them, or go without anything! What is more natural under such circumstances than for the employés to cheat their masters when they have a chance, and finally to drift into crime and the penitentiary?

The three men who had been assigned to the task of robbing Mr. Morton's bank wended their way to Front Street, and stopped at a common-looking edifice that might pass for a sailors' boarding-house. They went up-stairs to the room they had hired and sat down on the rickety chairs.

"I say, Bill," said one, "it strikes me that the chief ain't got all the brains in the establishment. I was thinking as we came along what a mess we would get into if we went through that wall. Now I've thought of a better plan. We will see the chief clerk and arrange it with him. At noon the cashier and three of the clerks go to lunch, while the chief clerk and an under clerk stay in the bank, and a watchman sits on the front steps. We can dress as three swells, and go into the front door of the bank when we see the cashier and the other clerks have gone. As I go up the steps I will drop half a dollar, which the watchman will pick up and call my attention to, and I will say, 'Keep it for your honesty and drink my health with it.' Ten to one he will go for a drink, and, if he does, I will iron and gag the chief clerk, while you two throw a bag over the youngster's head and tie his hands behind him. Three minutes will be time enough to pocket the contents of the strong-box, and a wagon and swift horse will soon take us out of sight of the watchman. If the watchman don't go for his drink we must try the other way."



The others were much pleased with the plan of their comrade, and it was agreed to try it. "There is one thing we were fortunate in," said the one addressed as Bill, "and that was in disguising ourselves so thoroughly when we were working on the wall. Our wigs would fool any one."

On the day of the robbers' meeting Allan Dare had closeted with him at his place of residence, Gabrielle, the girl who had been directed to shadow Jane Ross.

Gabrielle had been for three days closely watching the post-office to see if any one called for the letter sent to K. W., but no one came. The postmaster directed that no letter should be delivered to those initials from six in the evening till eight in the morning, during which time Gabrielle was off watch. A policeman with a warrant in his pocket for the man named Cole, was always on the alert to arrest any one whom Gabrielle should point out to him.

On this morning a delicate-looking boy appeared at the post-office window, and inquired for a letter addressed to K. W. The clerk was a long time in finding the letter, in the mean while Gabrielle being notified, who soon appeared at the window to inquire if there were any letters for her. As soon as the clerk saw her he gave the boy the letter for K. W. The boy started toward Broadway, Gabrielle following at a short distance, and the policeman following her.

The boy loitered along, gazing into the shop-windows, and at length, after consulting a clock, quickened his steps and turned into Fulton Street. At the end of the first block he stopped at a house and put his hand on the door-knocker. Then Gabrielle pounced upon him and held him. "Ah, little thief, you picked my pocket!" she exclaimed. "There is my purse in your bosom," she said as she adroitly placed it there.

The boy trembled. There was the purse which the girl said was hers. How was he to prove that he did not steal it?

"I ain't no thief," said the boy, whimpering. "Come in here and I'll prove it."

The door opened and they passed in, Gabrielle lingering a little and abusing the boy, until the policeman arrived and took his station by the door. The boy opened a door on the right, and Gabrielle dragged him up to a gentleman, who was writing at a desk and who raised his eyes in astonishment.

"Is this here thief yourn?" said Gabrielle. "He's gone an' stole my purse, an' I found it stickin' in his buzzim, an' I'm going to take the law on him for it."

"He's no thief, my good girl," said the man. "I've had him in my employ some time, and he is honest as the sun."

"Then the sun must be a big thief," said the girl, "for here's my purse that I tuck out of his buzzim. What do you call that if it ain't stealin'? I had a dollar and a shillin' in it."

"I went to the post-office, sir," said the boy, "and got your letter, and never stopped on the way or spoke to any one."

"I don't believe a word of it," said the girl; "you ain't got no letter. Seein' is believin'; it's all an excuse."

"Here it is," said the boy, handing the letter to his employer. "You'll believe it now, won't you?"

"Not unless the gentleman will say it's his letter. How do I know but what you've been stealing a letter out of some one's pocket?"

"Yes, my girl," said the man, "this letter is mine, and, to convince you, I will open and read it. You don't suppose I would commit a criminal act by opening another person's letter?" and he opened the letter and began to read.

In a moment his hand shook and his knees trembled. He snatched his hat and made toward the door, without an apology for his sudden exit. As he stepped into the street, Gabrielle, who was close behind, called out, "Seize him!" and before the man could collect his senses the policeman held him by the collar.

It was but a moment, however, for the fugitive, although not a stout man, was a powerful one. He shook the policeman off and was about to take to his heels when Gabrielle threw her arms about his neck from behind, and encumbered him with her weight so that he could not move. The policeman now soon had him in irons.

A crowd collected, and a couple of constables coming up to see what was the matter, the policeman said to one of them, "Here, Traddles, help me to get this fellow in-doors." The constable lending a hand, the prisoner was taken within and the door locked upon the crowd.

It did not take Gabrielle many minutes to go all through the house, locking all the doors and securing the keys.

The house had evidently been used by the prisoner as a sleeping place. One bedroom up-stairs was scantily furnished, and there

was a cot for the boy. These two persons were apparently the sole occupants of the premises.

In the confusion the boy had disappeared. "Bad lot that," she said. "He has carried off my purse," and so he had.

After the man was locked in the parlor, under charge of a constable, Gabrielle wrote a note and sent it by the policeman to the restaurant corner of Broadway and Leonard Street. In about three quarters of an hour there was a knock at the street-door, and the Rev. Mr. Raymond sent in his card. Gabrielle went out at once to him. The reverend gentleman said to her, "Gabrielle, I come apparently to see this gentleman in a law case. You understand?" He then took the keys of the house and put them in his pocket.

The Rev. Mr. Raymond now examined the house carefully, feeling the wall-paper with the point of his penknife. He particularly examined the fireplace in the prisoner's bedroom. There was no fire burning, but it was full of ashes and half-burned wood. On examining the bricks at the back of the fireplace, he found that the mortar for three courses of bricks was newer than the rest. He immediately forced the bricks up with the tongs. There was nothing visible but an iron plate. "Under that," he muttered. "The fellow is a bungler. I said so from the first."

With some trouble the plate was removed, and beneath it appeared several small boxes. One, of Russia leather, contained a diamond necklace, evidently belonging to Mrs. Ruggles. Another contained four rows of black pearls, then considered more valuable even than diamonds. The small boxes contained four watches and two diamond bracelets.

The Rev. Mr. Raymond rubbed his hands. "This will do for the present. There's quite a fortune stowed away in the fireplace."

He now quickly restored the iron plate and the bricks to their places, and pushed the ashes back into the fireplace. Then he lighted a fire and sat down in front for a quiet smoke.

No one, to look at this man, would have supposed that he had achieved a great victory over the gang of robbers that infested the city, and that he was about to carry joy to the heart of the old chief of police, who had been so roundly abused by the press.

He finished smoking his cigar, and, locking the door of the room, went down-stairs. Gabrielle was seated in a chair in the hall. "Wait here," said he, "until the prisoner is removed; then lock the front door and bring me the key."

Allan Dare, for it was he, walked slowly, like a decrepit man,

until he saw a hack, which he signaled, and entering rode to the police-office.

He found the chief of police sitting over the fire and very much out of sorts; in his hand was a newspaper that he had been reading.

"Well, Dare," he said, "glad to see you, but I wish you would come in any other disguise than that. I feel as if I should have to fork over a five-dollar bill for the church. Have you any news?"

"Not a great deal," said Allan, "but I have bagged Cole and have the darbies on him. I have recovered Mrs. Ruggles's diamonds and Mrs. Vandeusen's black pearls, two diamond bracelets, and four gold watches."

"The devil you have!" exclaimed the chief. "Excuse me, reverend sir, but I came near swearing," and he danced around the room with excitement. "Tell me all about it; I'm crazy to know."

Allan Dare locked the door, and taking from his pocket the boxes containing the jewelry, laid them before the amazed chief of police.

"Well, well," said the latter, "this repays me for months of mortification—and all done within a week. I am satisfied now that I have hitherto been surrounded by a set of imbeciles."

"I hope, sir, that after this, when a croaking old preacher complains to you that I have run off with his granddaughter, you won't believe him."

"Hush! don't ever mention that again; but I salute you, Mr. Vidocq Le Coque, as the great master of your profession."

"That is the greatest compliment I ever received," said Allan. "And now, sir, send a carriage to No. 309 Fulton Street for the prisoner. I place these jewels in your possession. Most of the credit for this job is due to that bright girl Gabrielle, who must be amply rewarded."

"She shall be," said the chief. "I will make the owners of the property pony up well, which they will be quite willing to do. Now sit down and tell me how the work was done."

"I had just sat down to breakfast," said Allan Dare, "when Gabrielle sent me a note announcing success. I jumped up and went to the scene of action without tasting a mouthful. So, if you will come around to a restaurant with me, we will take a private room and I will tell you the whole story over a good breakfast."

"But, first and foremost, Dare," said the chief, "let me write a few lines for the newspapers. It will afford a subject for conver-

sation in every house in New York." He sat down and wrote as follows:

"Important arrest and recovery of stolen goods.

"The villain who stole the diamonds from Mrs. Ruggles, in Duane Street, and the black pearls from Mrs. Vandensen, has been arrested by our vigilant police. In his possession were found, also, four gold watches and two diamond bracelets, which will be returned to their owners by the chief of police, upon their proving their right to the property."

"That's almost too modest," said the chief, "but it's modeled after Perry's report of his victory on Lake Erie."

"It reminds me, also, of Cæsar's *Veni, vidi, vici*," said Allan Dare.

Over the breakfast, which was now in order, the chief received a full account of the whole affair from beginning to end.

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## CHAPTER XVI.

### ALADDIN.

WHEN the newspapers came out the next morning there was great excitement throughout the city. The item concerning the arrest of the thief was inserted just as the chief of police wrote it, which whetted the curiosity of the people to know more. The news-gatherers for the daily papers rushed to the police-office to learn particulars, but it was deemed prudent by the chief to withhold them. The papers, however, managed to make several columns of reading matter out of the scanty details furnished.

The excitement hourly increased, for it was hinted that further developments had been made, showing that there was an extensive organization of house-breakers existing, of a character never before known.

The newspaper-offices were thronged by citizens anxious to obtain the latest information, and the presses were forced to their utmost to enable the editors to supply the demand for extra copies. All that was certainly known, however, was that a man was in jail and some jewels had been recovered, but who the man was, or where or by whom arrested, no one knew.

Mr. Eton had just opened his paper, and his wife had taken a seat by his side, when the merchant suddenly exclaimed, "Good gracious! Fanny, they have captured one of the robbers at the Vandeusen ball and recovered some of the jewelry!"

"You don't mean it!" said Mrs. Eton, jumping up. "Have they recovered my diamonds?"

"No, dearest," he replied, "and I don't care if they never do. The house of Eton & Co. can stand the loss of ten sets of diamonds without wincing. I am not going around whining over the loss of a little jewelry, as old Vandeusen does over his wife's black pearls—which are not half as pretty as white ones, anyhow."

"Do you think so, darling?" said Mrs. Eton, in her most winning way. "Oh, but I did long for a set of black pearls, just to show those Vandeusens they were not the only ones that could wear them. But if you think white pearls are prettier, I will be satisfied with three strings of them, but not smaller than marrowfat peas."

"Humph!" said Mr. Eton, looking at his wife over his spectacles, "I should think so."

"Yes, you dear old duck of a darling," said the innocent wife; "I'm proud when I wear handsome jewelry, as it shows people how rich you are. I heard a person remark at old Vandeusen's ball that Eton & Co. must be coining money, as Mrs. Eton wore such magnificent diamonds."

"Why do you call Vandeusen old, Fanny?" said Mr. Eton; "he is only fifty."

"Why, darling, he looks twenty years older than you. When you walk, your step is as elastic as a boy's."

"You shall have the pearls, darling," said Mr. Eton, "but I will give you a white set first. They will better become your youth and beauty."

As soon as Mr. Eton arrived at his office he wrote to his agent in Paris to send a set of false pearls, not to cost over four hundred dollars, but to send a bill at eighteen thousand.

That evening, after dinner, Deville came in, when Mr. Eton declared that he must go to his club. "I hope, darling," he said to his wife, "that you'll make yourself very agreeable to Deville while I am absent"; and to Deville he remarked, "I hate to leave my wife, even for an hour; she makes my life pass so charmingly, and is always so thoughtful of my comfort; but men in my position have duties to perform, and, as I am an important club man, and chair-

man of the committee on expenditures, I must go there to-night." Neither Mrs. Eton nor Deville interposing any objections, he departed.

Mrs. Eton asked Deville, as soon as they were alone, what he thought of the news in regard to the arrest of a robber and the recovery of jewelry. Deville replied that he thought the whole gang would be captured, for he was satisfied there must be an extensive organization, with some very able man at the head of it. "We can not," said he, "depend even on our own servants, who, in many cases, are probably leagued with the thieves."

"Dear me!" said Mrs. Eton, "how do I know that my French maid is not one of the gang? She's got such a queer name—Louise Mathilde Iolanthe Bric à Brac. I call her Lu."

"Very likely," said Deville, "that you will not find out whether she is honest until after your new set of diamonds are walked off with."

"And my old bear is going to give me a set of pearls worth eighteen thousand dollars! What do you think of that? And all the time I do not love him a bit—although he thinks I do."

"He had better give you a ship and cargo at once," said Deville; "perhaps that would open your heart to him."

"Oh, heavens! he is awful, and I am so tired of coddling him. Do you know the old song?—

"A young man, a young man ever for me,  
May and December can never agree."

But tell me, false knight, what were you doing when you spent all last evening at the Mortons? I was so angry that I went up-stairs and rubbed at the spot where you kissed me the other night until I nearly rubbed the skin off."

"That was a mistake on my part," said Deville. "I should have had more respect for your husband, who has always treated me so confidently—"

"And who," she said, excitedly, "you would betray to-morrow if you had not become enamored of Miss Morton's ugly black eyes. Do you deny that?"

"I deny nothing," said Deville, "but I can not think Miss Morton's eyes ugly."

"Ah!" said Mrs. Eton, "I see how it is; you are just devoted to that girl. If you visit there again you'll break my heart," and she burst into tears, while Deville sat quietly by without attempt-

ing to soothe her. "To think that you," she continued, sobbing, "should be taken with a girl just from school, with a figure like a French doll, and as awkward as a young calf, while I, who am devoted to you, and have a figure and style that every one of the women of fashion envy, can not win a smile from you."

"Oh, yes, you can," said Deville, quietly. "If you will only get a note in Mrs. Vandeußen's handwriting, and signed with her name, giving me permission to take a friend of mine to her Saturday reception, I will give you all the smiles you want."

"And you won't look at Miss Morton's ugly eyes?" she said, brightening up.

"No," said Deville, "I won't look at her eyes."

"Well, then, you shall have the note to-morrow, for next Monday Mrs. Vandeußen and her daughter start for New Orleans. The doctor has ordered them to leave as soon as possible, for Miss Vandeußen has consumptive symptoms."

"Then," said Deville, "we are friends again, and I will call to-morrow for the note. Now I must go, for I have so much to do this evening." He arose and offered her his hand, but Mrs. Eton pouted and put her handkerchief to her eyes.

"And this is your promise to Mr. Eton," she said, "not to leave me alone this evening, with the city full of robbers!" Here she sobbed outright.

Deville was not made of stone, so he sat down on the sofa and, putting his arm around her waist, raised her beautiful head and kissed her pouting lips. She clasped his hand nervously and looked up into his face, her look telling all that was in her heart.

He, however, seemed to be impelled only by an impulse of kindness. It was as if he had kissed a spoiled sister. Then he arose to go, she clinging to him until he got to the door. As the door closed she flung herself into an easy-chair and seemed to be absorbed in a reverie.

Mr. Eton came home about an hour later, and his wife ran to meet him with every appearance of affection.

"O darling!" she exclaimed, "how I have missed you! You must manage to stay at home oftener. I feel so lonely when you are away. Deville has been so stupid I could hardly get a word out of him. I think the story that he has left his heart in Europe must be true."

"Yes," said Mr. Eton; "but, Fanny, you must try <sup>to</sup> keep him as our honored guest. He will be a millionaire yet, and I



want to keep in with him. I might some day need an advance, though the house of Eton & Co. could lay him out twice over just now—but who knows?”

That evening Robert le Diable called at Brice's quarters and found the father seated on the sofa, having apparently quite recovered from his late adventure. He was dressed in a blue coat with brass buttons. His handsome daughter (in a neat gray costume with lace sleeves and scarf) was hemming some handkerchiefs by his side.

Robert looked in astonishment at the metamorphosed girl and took in her singular beauty, while old Brice lost not a single expression of his face.

“You look better, Mr. Brice, than when last I saw you,” said Robert.

“Yes,” said Brice, “I am better, but I had to sit three days with beefsteaks over my eyes to take out the swelling and bruises. Even now I am not quite free of them. Confound that fist of yours; you might as well have hit me with a sledge-hammer at once.”

“You naughty man!” said Flossy, “I don't think I can ever like you for striking papa. You ought to have let him shoot you—but then I wouldn't have these nice clothes. What do you think of me, sir?”

“That you are simply beautiful beyond imagination.”

“You dear, nice man!” was the quick reply. “Papa never said that much to me. He's been so busy admiring himself that he took very little notice of me. I have been dressed up three days, waiting for you to come, for I knew you would say something nice to me. I was out all the morning the day after you left us, and found a Madame Bobinet, who had a stock of dresses already made up, and who supplied me with what I required for the present. I bought you, Mr. Robert, a Russia-leather pocket-book in which to put your money and notes, for I noticed you pulled them out of your pocket the other night, and that's not nice.”

“I must tell you,” said Robert, after thanking her for the pocket-book, “that you are to move to-morrow into your new quarters, with which I am sure you will be charmed. I will call for you at ten o'clock. And here, Mr. Brice, is your first month's pay in advance,” which the gentleman in question pocketed very readily.

"Mr. Robert," said Flossy, "don't forget that we are now to be known as the Carroltons," and she laughed merrily.

"Now," said Robert, "I must bid you good-night," and he started for the door.

"Wait," said Flossy, running after him, "you dear, good man, I must reward you for your kindness," and she raised herself on her toes and kissed his cheek. "Now go to sleep on that."

"You are a bright little kitten," said Robert, "and ought one day to make some good man's heart glad."

"Yes," said she, "that's what I'm going to be—a nice little kitten—men take so kindly to helpless ones."

At ten next morning Robert called with a hack and took father and daughter, with their trunks, to No. 69 Chambers Street, where he led the way up-stairs to a handsome suite of rooms, consisting of a parlor and two bedrooms.

On the center-table in the parlor was a large bouquet, in the center of which the name "Flossy" appeared in violets.

"Oh, you darling man!" screamed the girl when she saw the flowers, and, seizing his hand, she kissed it.

"If he stands that," thought Carrolton, as he is now to be called, "he is adamant."

Then they went to examine the bedrooms, where every comfort was to be found.

"I don't see how I am to pay for all this grandeur," said Carrolton, "out of two hundred dollars a month."

"These are my quarters," said Robert, "for which, at present, I have no use; therefore your rent will be nothing. Your meals will be sent to you from the caterer's; you can order what you please."

"And what service am I to render for all this?" said Carrolton.

"Merely buy and sell stocks as I direct," said Robert. "You are to operate in Wall Street."

"What a relief!" said Carrolton, drawing a long breath. "I thought I had to do some devilish thing or other; but you've found my price, and I'd go to the devil for you."

"And what am I to do," added Flossy, "for all that I am getting?"

"Why, play the sweet little kitten that you are," replied Robert. "And here is a silver card-case full of visiting-cards, with your name, Miss Flossy Carrolton, engraved upon them. To-morrow

Madame Bobinet will call with an assortment of dresses and millinery, such as the most fashionable ladies wear—bonnets, gloves, fans—everything, in fact, that a lady wants. Here's five hundred dollars to pay for them; don't say a word. When I call to-morrow I shall expect to see you dressed in a charming costume." With these words he disappeared.

Flossy stood looking at the notes in her hand. "Papa," she cried, "this gentleman must be Aladdin of the wonderful lamp. You never had anything like this since I've known you, papa. We lived in awful poor quarters in England, and the place we've just left was simply a pig-pen."

"Well, child," said the father, "we certainly *seem* to be in luck. I only hope everything is all right."

"Why, popsy, what a goosey-gander you are! as if that handsome gentleman could do anything wrong. He's an angel in disguise."

"Yes, Flossy," said her father, "but the angel who rebelled against God in heaven was as handsome a being as the celestial light ever shone upon, yet he was cast out of heaven for his wickedness."

"I don't know anything about that," said Flossy. "I only know that I adore Mr. Robert, and only hope he'll remember to bring me a handsome breast-pin, for he has forgotten that."

"Ah! woman, woman," exclaimed Carrolton, "how little it takes to tickle your vanity! Flossy, you are like all the rest of your sex."

"Why, dear old popsy," said the girl, "of course I am. Have not I a part to play, else why these dresses, ornaments, bank-notes? I don't know what else is coming, and, papa dear, you know your little Flossy has seen nothing but hard times all her life, and has borne them cheerfully. Now, you dear old pop, I'm going to swing, launch right out on the sea of life and dance over the billows. I shall play my part like a little kitten, full of glee, and, while you are dealing in Wall Street stock, I shall purchase stock in tip-top society. I haven't spent my eighteen years of gypsy life without picking up some stray bits of experience. I have seen what straits you have been in, and what ability you displayed in getting out of them. Do not fear that your little Flossy will not be equal to any emergency. Now, popsy, I'll give you a kiss and lead you into lunch, which is ready. Come and see," she said, running back, "such a lunch as you never saw, and such a charming

set of table-ware ! I don't see why Aladdin didn't stop and lunch with us, just to see how the little kitten enjoys her surroundings."

At that moment Robert walked in unannounced. They invited him to lunch, and he sat down. Presently he put his hand in his pocket and drew forth a small box, which he placed in Flossy's hand. "There's a lady's watch and chain for you," he said, "to make your toilet complete."

Flossy's eyes dilated when, on opening the box, she saw a tiny gold watch set with pearls, and a chain of exquisite workmanship.

"O Aladdin !" she exclaimed, "you are indeed wonderful. Why, I thought this was a breast-pin, as you didn't send one, and I supposed all fashionable young ladies wore them."

"Always call me Aladdin, Miss Flossy," said Robert. "You'll find half a dozen breast-pins here before night. Now, Mr. Carrolton, there will be a handsome carriage here at four o'clock, and I want you and Miss Flossy to ride out on the Bloomingdale Road this afternoon, and let the people see you. I would like you to dress in English style."

"We shall be delighted to oblige you," said Carrolton. "I am dying for a mouthful of fresh air. I haven't been out since the night you carried me home."

"And now, good-day," said Robert, as he rose from the table. "You will not see me again for a week."

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## CHAPTER XVII.

### ANOTHER GREAT ROBBERY.

Four days after the arrest of Cole, or K. W., the citizens of New York were again startled by the announcement in the papers of six more audacious robberies.

A merchant on Broadway had five thousand dollars taken from his iron chest, although there were three persons sleeping in the building at the time—a young man and two girls, all of irreproachable character. A house on Bowling Green had been entered, and some two thousand dollars' worth of silverware had been carried off. A house in Church Street had been entered, and all the silver,

and jewelry to a considerable amount, had been taken. Two houses on the Battery had been similarly rifled of valuables.

But worst of all was the bold robbery of Morton & Co.'s banking-house in broad daylight.

It seems that three well-dressed men had taken advantage of the temporary absence of the watchman, and most of the clerks, at luncheon to enter the bank. The chief clerk and an assistant were quickly bound and gagged by the robbers, the bank-vault opened, and when the cashier and other clerks returned from luncheon, it was found that about one hundred and sixty thousand dollars in bank-notes and three thousand dollars in gold coin had been carried off. The most curious part of the business was how the thieves got into the chest containing the money, which was found locked and the key in the chief clerk's pocket.

The natural inference was that the watchman, who had deserted his post on the front steps of the bank, was in collusion with the robbers, although the cashier found him at the door when he returned, a few minutes after the robbery.

As near as the cashier could learn from the statements of the two clerks, who were terribly frightened, the robbers were not in the bank more than five minutes, during which time two stood guard with loaded pistols while the other rifled the vault.

A person in the street saw three men, answering the description given by the watchman, get into a covered wagon and drive rapidly up Broadway, but this circumstance did not arouse his suspicion.

The poor watchman was of course immediately arrested and committed to jail. He had occupied the position for nearly thirty years, and was receiving the enormous salary of twenty-five dollars a month. The plan of the robbers to get rid of him while they operated in the bank had been only too successful.

To describe the excitement of the citizens at this new and extensive raid on their property would be impossible. It seemed as if the robbers were revenging themselves upon the city for the arrest of Cole, and some of the more timid souls began to think it the part of wisdom not to trouble them at all, if they would be content to work on a smaller scale.

As for Mr. Morton, he was almost crushed. The amount stolen consisted of special deposits that he might be called upon at any moment to make good; and, although his private means were large, it was not possible at a moment's notice to command the amount likely to be required. When a bank meets with a

heavy loss the depositors are merciless. Already demands were made at the counter that were promptly liquidated, but checks began to pour in so rapidly that it was feared the cash left on hand would soon be exhausted.

Mr. Morton sat at his desk looking very gloomy. He was thinking that he should have to sacrifice some valuable real estate to meet the demands of his depositors. He thought over the names of bankers to whom he could apply, but the survey did not give him much satisfaction. He feared that most of them would be rather glad to hear of his troubles, as it would add to their own importance.

At this moment word came that Mr. James Deville desired an interview, and that gentleman was accordingly ushered into Mr. Morton's private office.

Mr. Morton received Deville coldly, which was strange, considering that Deville had been introduced at his house a few evenings before. But Mr. Morton looked with some suspicion on a young man who discounted notes at a less rate than his brother bankers—something in the eyes of the fraternity next door to a crime.

Deville had consoled himself for Mr. Morton's coolness, on the occasion of his visit to the house, by conversing with the beautiful Louise, who, although quite as haughty as her father, was not insensible to the brilliant conversation of Deville, or to his handsome face and figure.

George May hung around her most of the time when Deville was present, and seemed somewhat restless at Louise giving any attention to another while he was present ; but Louise was thoroughly able to manage any number of lovers.

A smile or two thrown in George May's direction soon made him feel easy in mind, for he was satisfied that he stood high in Louise's favor, and was resolved to make her his wife.

On this particular evening Louise Morton seemed determined to draw Mr. Deville on. She saw that he could not keep his eyes off her, and drank in every word she uttered. She seemed to look through him with her beautiful dark eyes, which at times, when she said something severe, had a sinister expression that made the heart recoil.

When Deville took his leave, at the expiration of an hour, he expressed the hope that he might be permitted to call again, to which Miss Morton answered, "I am always glad to see my father's friends."

It might have been his imagination, but he thought he detected some hauteur in her manner as she said this, and he went to his rooms to meditate for the rest of the evening over his cigar.

After Deville's departure Louise set to work to vex George May by singing Deville's praises. "What a handsome man!" she murmured. "What fine eyes—and such a figure! I do so like tall men."

"And yet," said May, spitefully, "no one knows where the fellow came from, or who he is."

Louise jumped up, her eyes glittering like those of a panther. "Have you dared," she exclaimed, "to introduce into this house a man of whom you know nothing?"

"He has the *entrée* of the best society," said May, "and this must be my excuse."

"That's excuse enough," said Louise; "but it was spiteful in you, Mr. May, to say anything about him. I am sure he is far better than any of the old Knickerbockers and Vandernoodles we met the other night at Vandeusen's. And the man talks so well, I hope he'll come again."

"Yet," said May, "you were not very gracious to him, and did not ask him to repeat his visit."

"Wasn't I?" she said. "I suppose you expected me to embrace him, and ask him to breakfast to-morrow. That's not my way. I keep men at their proper distance."

"So it seems," rejoined May, "for, although I have laid my heart at your feet, you have done nothing but trample on it."

"George May, how can you talk so? Don't I send you on all my errands? If I want a spool of silk, who gets it but you? Who selects my music but you? And haven't I had you running all over New York to obtain a pretty Skye terrier for me? What more could a man want than this? What selfish creatures men are, to be sure!"

"If those are proofs of affection," said May, "I suppose I ought to be satisfied, but I would like some kind words now and then, and soft looks from those beautiful eyes."

She looked at him scornfully. "No man gets that from me yet a while. George May, you are too prosy; let us talk of something else."

"No," said May, "you are tired of me, and I will leave you, hoping to find you in a kinder mood to-morrow." She looked quite indifferent, and May went out with a heavy heart.

As May left the room Mr. Morton entered. "Louise," said he, "I want to have some conversation with you."

"Yes, papa."

"The first thing I have to say to you, Louise, is, that I hope Mr. Deville will not be asked to this house again."

"Why, papa?"

"Because, my child, no one knows who he is or where he came from."

"Perhaps, papa, he is a Knickerbocker or a Vandernoodle in disguise—although I hope he has not the misfortune to belong to any of those antediluvian families. I only know that he is the handsomest man I have seen in society, while report says he is getting on in business, and will soon eclipse all other bankers."

"Nonsense, my child, don't believe all you hear. A man who will discount a note half per cent lower than regular banker's rates can not be a person of much principle. I shouldn't wonder if he hadn't ten thousand dollars in his bank. Mahogany counters and plate-glass windows do not amount to much. You always find solid bankers occupying very modest-looking buildings, Louise."

"Like yours, papa? That is such a dingy old place that it is a trial to me to enter it when I go down town."

"Then don't go there," said Mr. Morton, somewhat nettled.

"But listen to me. I have launched you into society at considerable expense, and I don't want you to make any mistakes in your *début*. You should be very careful in selecting your acquaintances, for it would not be pleasant to have your name connected with that of a *parvenu*. When you do marry, I want you to be connected with the first families of the country. Your education, wealth, and beauty will command such an alliance."

"With the Vanderdonks and the Vandernoodles? Yes, papa, it would be charming; but am I to be married right off? Are you not going to allow me a little time to look about and enjoy life? And then, papa, I can't help the expense you have been put to; it wasn't my fault that I was sent into the world."

"Louise," said her father, "you are a most provoking girl. Will you never listen respectfully to what I have to say for your own good? My desire that you should have only the best associates, and should connect yourself with the best families, is certainly a laudable one."

"Yes, papa, but from whom are *we* descended? I never heard



you speak of our ancestors. Are we in any way connected with the Vanderdonks or the Vandernoodles ?”

“Hush, Louise, don’t be disrespectful. I am the founder of my family, although the Mortons are an ancient and honorable race.”

“Why don’t we wear their coat-of-arms on the panel of our carriage ?”

By this time Mr. Morton was quite out of patience. Looking sternly at his daughter, he said : “Louise, you have been the cause of a great deal of trouble to me, and have formed associations that I have had hard work to break up. That is the reason why I cautioned you against inviting a man to my house of whom I know nothing.”

“I will tell Peter, when Mr. Deville calls, that you don’t want him to visit here.”

“You will do nothing of the kind, miss ; you will merely tell Peter to say you are not at home.”

“Yes, papa, but that wouldn’t be the truth, and mamma says a white lie is the meanest thing in the world.”

“You are trying to divert me from the thread of my conversation,” said Mr. Morton. “I might as well come to the point at once. When I paid Madame Boulanger’s school-bill she said she was afraid I would not be pleased with the little progress you had made, but that it was not her fault, for she had done all she could to advance you, but that you were unmanageable and set her at defiance ; and worse still, that you had become involved in a love affair in her school with a brother of one of the young ladies, which was only found out after you went away. Madame Boulanger came to the knowledge of this by finding a package of letters addressed to you, which you left on top of a high shelf, some of which letters were quite abhorrent to the madame’s sense of propriety. Here are the letters,” said Mr. Morton, taking a package from his pocket. “Had they fallen into unfriendly hands they would have ruined you. I have read them, and the expressions used toward yourself are simply shocking.”

“Yes, papa dear,” said Louise, “but those letters are not mine. Madeline Spanker, my chummy at school, had my permission to let her lover address his letters for her to me. Madeline kept them in an old hat-box in my room, and used to pass half her time reading them.”

Louise told this lie as calmly as any woman of the world, initiated in all its ways, could have done.

"But," said her father, somewhat staggered by his daughter's coolness, "some of Madame Boulanger's most trusted scholars report that you would retire to your room under pretense of not feeling well, and would steal out about dusk, and sometimes be absent an hour from the house, slipping in again through the basement when the supper-bell rang."

"Oh, papa!" said Louise, "to suspect me of such a thing! Why, that was Madeline Spanker, who used to slip out and take a walk with her lover."

"But I am told," said Mr. Morton, "that you wear a gold ring with a man's name engraved on the inside. Let me see it."

Louise was equal to the occasion. "It's all a lie," she said, "from beginning to end. The way I came to have the ring is this: Madeline Spanker got me to wear it for her when we were out of her room, and I would give it to her to wear when we were up-stairs. I came away in a hurry and forgot to give the ring up. Here it is, papa; you can see it if you like," and she handed the ring to him.

Mr. Morton examined the ring closely. It was marked inside "Edgar." Then he put it in his pocket. "Any way," he said, "it's an ugly business, and no young lady of proper notions would have lent herself to such improprieties. It is on account of doubts entertained by me regarding you that I am anxious you should form no more associations of this kind. You must associate only with those in your own sphere. I shall make further inquiries into this matter, for I am not at all satisfied, Louise, with your statement."

"Poor me!" exclaimed Louise, covering her face with her hands and sobbing. "I am to be condemned on the word of that horrid old woman, who, I can tell you, papa, is a most disreputable character, as I can prove." She threw herself upon the sofa and wept bitterly.

Mr. Morton hated a scene, so he rose, and, saying, "We shall see," left the room without making any attempt to soothe his daughter.

He had no sooner departed than Louise stood up, without a tear in her eyes, which were glittering with hate and temper.

"The old hag!" she exclaimed, "to expose me in this way. I will make her life intolerable."

Then she took from her pocket a perfumed note and threw it

into the fire. "They shall not find that out, at all events," she muttered. "I must be more cautious in future."

Mr. Morton was much depressed with the circumstance connected with this interview until the robbery of the bank, a few days after, drove it from his mind. When Deville called he was not in the best of humor.

After formal salutations had passed, Mr. Morton said, "Mr. Deville, to what may I attribute the honor of this visit?"

"To nothing, sir, but to show my respect and sympathy for a gentleman who has met with a misfortune."

"Sympathy!" said the banker, frowning. "I ask no sympathy from any one, if that is all you came for, sir. You see I am very busy; the affairs of my bank take up all my time."

"So I see," said Deville, preserving his calmness; "but my sympathy consists in offering you the use of my bank. I will honor all checks that you may not be able to meet on the instant, for I see your depositors are pressing you. Or I will send over the amount you may require to relieve yourself."

"You, sir!" said the banker, gasping for breath. "Why, you astonish me. My friends have not come forward quite as promptly as I expected to offer their services; and Mr. Eton, on whom I depended, was one of the first to withdraw his deposits. I am much obliged to you, but your action would not stay the torrent."

"If you will excuse me," said Deville, "how much would you require to meet all demands?"

"More than you ever dreamed of, young man," said Morton, sarcastically. "I shall need two hundred thousand dollars. I have more than that out in loans of hand, but can not make them available at short notice. Thank you for your offer, but you can not help me; it would require too much money."

"If you will permit me," said Deville, "I will deposit two hundred thousand dollars in your bank in half an hour."

"Great heavens!" exclaimed Mr. Morton to himself, "how unjust have I been to this man! Sir," he said, taking Deville by the hand, "you are one of nature's noblemen, and I shall always honor and respect you—yet in my heart I did you injustice. I am not one who lightly gives his friendship to any one. I am perhaps a cold, calculating man, yet I honor nobleness of character, and you may rest assured that I shall remain your debtor all my days. I could have tided over this difficulty had there been the least warn-

ing of a rush on the bank, but it came like a clap of thunder, and I almost ~~sunk~~ <sup>snk</sup> under the blow.

"My life has been fortunate in money matters, so that I am not used to reverses, and it would be a great mortification to me to be obliged to close my bank even temporarily. Thanks to you, I shall not need to do so now, and my credit will be more than secured. In an hour more I might have been forced to close my doors. But my depositors will soon bring their money back, when they find I have ample funds to meet all demands. But what a treacherous world this is, and how little can friends be depended on in an emergency!"

Deville listened quietly to Mr. Morton's remarks. "I had better go and send over my deposit," he said, "for I see checks are coming in faster than your clerks can pay them."

"But before you go," said Mr. Morton, "let me say to you that I trust hereafter we shall be warm friends, and that you will make my house your home. My wife and daughter will always make you welcome," and he pressed Deville's hand warmly.

Deville shortly returned with two clerks carrying packages of notes. As soon as the crowd of depositors that were surging around the counter perceived that the resources of the bank were unlimited they commenced to waver, and many of them went home without stopping to get their money.

Next day most of the money that had been drawn from the bank was again deposited, and Mr. Morton's credit stood higher than ever.

"Louise," said Mr. Morton that evening, "I have made a great mistake in regard to Mr. Deville. I want him received and treated as my warmest friend."

"Yes, papa; have you found out that he is related to the Vandernoodles or the Knickerwinkles? I always thought he would turn out to be a prince in disguise."

"No, my child, but he is one of nature's noblemen, and I am under obligations to him such as I can never repay."

Notwithstanding Mr. Morton had come out of the day's struggle successfully, he had rather a sore heart. He had lost over two hundred thousand dollars by the robbery—a large fortune in those days—and then his wife's diamonds had been stolen. It would take time to repair these great losses, and the banker's anxiety of mind was so great that he seemed to become older and grayer from day to day.

On his return to his lodgings Deville found a note from Mrs. Eton, inclosing one in Mrs. Vandensen's handwriting, as follows :

MY DEAR MRS. ETON : It will afford me the greatest pleasure to receive, at any time, a visit from Mr. Deville and any friend he may bring with him.

He will always be welcome at my house. I leave to-morrow morning for New Orleans with my daughter, and shall expect to see Mr. Deville on our return.

Yours lovingly,

EMMA VANDEUSEN.

Deville smiled pleasantly when he read this note, which he looked up carefully in his writing-desk.

Mr. Vandensen did not accompany his wife and daughter on their journey. He was too much involved in his gas project, which at this time was going on swimmingly. The company had been formed, and the stock was up to a hundred and fifty dollars a share, with a prospect that it would pay finally twenty-five per cent dividend.

Every night Mr. Vandensen's house was brilliantly illuminated, and the street-lamps threw their bright light over the throng of people that assembled to gaze on the novel spectacle of night turned into day.

All the iron-foundries in the city were engaged in manufacturing pipes, which were being laid along the streets to the great discomfort of pedestrians, who often blessed Mr. Vandensen for his zeal ; but he went ahead in despite of criticism, looking to the future for his vindication.

The day of the run on Mr. Morton's bank Mr. Eton returned home from his counting-house in high good humor.

"I have done a good business to-day, darling," he said to his wife. "Two ships came in from China loaded with teas. Tea will go off like hot cakes. Silks have advanced, and I will get rid of mine by the end of the week. I have saved twenty thousand dollars by withdrawing my deposits from that purse-proud fellow, Morton, who by this time to-morrow will be a financial wreck. He couldn't buy his wife another set of diamonds, and I don't see how he can possibly stand the loss of so much money in a lump."

"Why, darling," said his wife, "you ought to have had pity on him, for, even if you had lost the money, the house of Eton & Co. could stand it."

"Business is business, Fanny," said Mr. Eton. "I must look

out for the pennies if I want the dollars to take care of themselves. A man who trusts his chief clerk with the key of the strong-box while the cashier goes out to lunch isn't much of a banker. It rather pleases me to see these haughty aristocrats get a knock occasionally. Ha! ha! they'll never catch Job Eton that way. I haven't much faith in banks, and what money I have by me is kept in a stone vault, the key always in my pocket, and a watchman with a double-barreled shotgun always on hand. That's the way to keep money secure, Fanny."

"Oh, darling!" said Mrs. Eton, "I am sorry for the way you have acted to Mr. Morton. I don't love you a bit to-night." She went out of the room, leaving Eton with no company but his newspaper.

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## CHAPTER XVIII.

### THE OLD SOLDIER AND THE DRAYMAN.

WORDS can not express the consternation of the old chief of police when he heard of the extensive robberies that had been committed in one twenty-four hours. He started at once for the quarters of Allan Dare, whom he found quietly reading the papers and trying to learn something that would give him a clew to the affair.

"What do you think of this business, Allan?" exclaimed the almost breathless chief. "This will never do; I shall have all the newspapers down on me."

"Probably you will," said Allan Dare, handing the chief a chair. "They would hardly lose such an opportunity to amuse the public. These robberies satisfy me that there is a great organization of thieves in this city, directed by some person of superior capacity. Cole probably belonged to the society, but he was a bungler. The blows lately struck show what an able general is conducting the campaign."

"What are we to do about it?" asked the chief.

"You know," said Allan, "that I ordered the girl Gabrielle to shadow Jane Ross. Gabrielle behaved so stupidly in the house where she was employed that Jane took her for an idiot, and paid so little attention to her that Gabrielle had many opportunities of

watching her. Three nights ago she saw the Ross girl go out, and followed her, never losing sight of her, although she turned and twisted about like a hare.

"Gabrielle followed the girl to a low eating-house in Pine Street, where she disappeared. Gabrielle placed herself on watch across the street, and in the course of half an hour saw some forty people, men and women, enter the house. After a time Gabrielle went into the eating-house. It was a dirty place, with a few old tables and chairs, and an old German with a white apron acting as master of ceremonies. 'Vot vill yer av?' he said; 'shops mit pred and putter, or dose zhrimp vich effry potty likes so mush?' 'I will take a cup of coffee,' said Gabrielle. 'Vell,' he said, 've doshent shell dose dings.' 'Then I will take a cup of tea,' said Gabrielle. 'Mein Gott!' said the German, 'dosh yer dinks I shell dose tings too? No, no, goes home, goot girls; we shells nottings but shops and dose zhrimp.' So Gabrielle went away. She saw no one in the dining-room out of the many that had entered; and the few persons she saw leave the building came from a cellar below the dining-room. Depend upon it, sir, that is one of the thieves' rendezvous, for no doubt they have several."

"But what were the women doing there?" said the chief.

"They are the tools," said Dare, "with which burglars work. They open houses from the inside, give information, take keys from doors to give impressions, make dogs temporarily sick, so that they'll give no alarm, and a thousand other deviltries. Why, sir, I spent a year among the thieves of Paris just to learn their tricks. In a few days I shall have some assistants that I can depend upon, and then you will see us begin to do something."

"By that time," said the chief, despondingly, "half the houses in New York will be robbed. Why not examine this public-house?"

"That would put the rogues on their guard. But I will find out all about it before the week is out, and the thieves be none the wiser. In the mean time we will have to use such of the police as we can trust to try and act on the information I shall gain. I will go at once to Morton's bank and ascertain the numbers of the bank-bills stolen. As to the gold, that's all melted up by this time. Attention should be paid first to great matters; the small ones will take care of themselves. Now, sir, will you please write a note introducing me to the banker, and asking permission for me to examine the premises, and obtain such testimony as may be needed?"

"I will leave you," said Allan after the note was written. "It would not do to have us seen together, and I have to put on my disguise before leaving for the bank."

On his way to the office the chief stopped for half an hour at a chop-house for lunch, and, when he reached his office, was told that a man was waiting to see him.

The person in question was an odd-looking character. He had but one arm and one leg, the arm having seemingly been amputated at the shoulder, and the leg above the knee. He had an ordinary wooden leg, very wide trousers, and carried a heavy crutch. He had one dark, fierce-looking eye, and over the other a green patch; his hair was long, black, and unkempt, his clothes shabby, and of a semi-military cut. Altogether this man was not an agreeable spectacle, no matter how much he might excite one's sympathies.

The chief looked at the stranger while he with difficulty tried to rise from his chair. "Keep your seat, my man," he said, "and say your say. What do you want with me?"

The man spoke in broken English. "As you see, sir," said he, "I am a wounded soldier. I was at Waterloo, and was for three years afterward in the Hôtel des Invalides at Paris, but my daughter and her husband determined to immigrate to America, and brought me with them, as I couldn't live away from my daughter and her child. Two years ago my son-in-law got into bad habits and began to abuse me. Finally he turned me out of doors. Of course, a man in my condition can't do much, and I have been obliged to beg. I am only half a man, and yet the monster that married my daughter turned me into the street."

"If what you say is true, he must be a wretch indeed," said the chief of police.

"All true, sir, I assure you; but I think I can get even with him. He is engaged in work that will bring him to jail."

"What!" exclaimed the chief, his mind running on the recent robberies, and believing he was about to receive important information. "Where does he live? What's his name, and what has he been doing?"

"His name, sir, is Pierre Chauvel; he lives at 340 Front Street, and his crime is house-breaking."

"House-breaking!" cried the chief; "can you prove it?"

"Yes, sir, I can."

"And what may your name be?" asked the chief.



"My name," said the stranger, quietly, "is Allan Dare. Perhaps you have heard of me."

"Sold again!" exclaimed the chief. "But where in the name of heaven are your leg, your arm, and your eye?"

"They are all here," said Allan, "stowed away; but I hope you are satisfied that I know how to disguise myself."

The disguise was simple enough when Allan explained it to the chief. The missing arm merely hung down at the side. The lower part of one leg was triced up inside the wide trousers, the patch being easily applied. The nose was of silver, enameled to represent that of a drunkard.

"But how do you expect to gain admittance to the bank in this guise?" asked the chief. "They would order you out as a loafer."

"Not with your note. When they see how I go to work I will soon obtain admittance. I came only to let you see me in one of my characters."

"The devil wouldn't know you in your present shape," said the chief, "and I begin to think you must be in league with his satanic majesty. You would have made a fortune, Allan, if you had gone on the stage."

"All the world's a stage," said Dare, "on which every man plays his part. I am playing mine. I am fitted for nothing so well as this." He bade the chief good-afternoon, and wended his way to Mr. Morton's bank.

He found the bank about closing business for the day, and that many of the clerks were gone.

When Dare entered the bank the chief clerk called to him, exclaiming, "What do you want? Clear out!"

"Yes," said Dare, "when I am told to go by your master," and he eyed the clerk with his one orb as if he would bore him through. He did not like the chief clerk's looks in the least; he had a sort of hang-dog expression that was not reassuring.

"Give this note to Mr. Morton," said Dare, "and don't keep me waiting." He gave the order in tones so peremptory that the clerk did not hesitate to obey.

Mr. Morton, on reading the note, came immediately out of his private office; but, when he saw the curious-looking figure before him, he said, "There must be some mistake here."

"No, sir," said Dare, "there is no mistake." Then in a low voice he continued, "I am the detective sent to unravel the mystery of the robbery."

"Ah!" said Mr. Morton; "but why this unseemly disguise?"

"Because," said Dare, "I must never be known by any one, or else my occupation's gone. I ask you to humor me in this matter. I would like to speak to your chief clerk alone."

"What can you have to say to him?" asked the banker in surprise.

"Only do as I ask, sir, and you will see the good effects of it."

Mr. Morton looked askance, but the man's language was good, and he had the indorsement of the chief of police. He thought it strange that the man should want to see the chief clerk, but he called to the clerk, saying, "Mr. Mann, a person wishes to speak to you."

The clerk came forward, looking rather pale and shaky, which was perhaps not extraordinary, considering his late experience.

"A private room, bub," said the detective; "no one must hear us talk."

"In here, then," said the clerk, shaking all over, as he led the way to a small apartment. "What do you want with me?" he said.

"Want o' you?" said Dare. "Nothin', bub, but you wants suthin' of me. The boys leave for furren parts to-morrow, an' wants to see you at onst, to divide the swag."

"Hush, for God's sake!" exclaimed the trembling clerk. "I want nothing from any one. What do you mean by talking to me in this way?"

"You want your share of the job, don't you?" said Dare; "or will you compromise for ten thousand, and let me pay you on the spot? But you'd better see the boys at onst and get your share. They'll have to go abroad. It's gettin' too hot for 'em here."

By this time the clerk's teeth were chattering as if he were suffering from cold, and Allan Dare knew that he had his man.

"Step out as soon as it's dark," said Allan, "and see the boys, or they'll be likely to come and see you, for they ain't goin' to leave this without some security that you won't peach after they're gone."

"For God's sake, hush!" cried the clerk; "you'll ruin me. I'm ruined anyhow. What will become of me! What will they think outside of my being closeted with such a looking fellow as you?"

"I'm a veteran of Napoleon's army," said Dare, "and if anybody makes insinuations against me I'll smash his head with my crutch. Now take a pull at this here brandy, and when you come

out you won't have that *ague-fit*." He handed the clerk a pocket-flask, who speedily drank half a tumbler of raw brandy.

Dare now walked into Mr. Morton's room. "I have questioned your chief clerk, Mr. Morton," said he, "about some points, and he has satisfied me ; but, as it is getting dark, I will call again in the morning to continue my investigation. You may think my method a little singular, but I hope it will prove successful."

"But," said Mr. Morton, "you don't seem to have done much hitherto. Our police and detective system is the worst in the world."

"I agree with you, sir, but I have been connected with the New York police only a short time. I caught the thief who stole Mrs. Ruggles's diamonds the week after the robbery, and secured all the evidence necessary to send him to the penitentiary."

"If that's the case," said Mr. Morton "I have strong hopes that you will succeed now."

"Don't notice anything in the appearance of your chief clerk," said Dare, "and let him go to-night without any remark."

"Good heavens !" exclaimed Mr. Morton, "you don't suspect *him* ? Why, the rascals treated him brutally."

"Nevertheless," said the other, "please do as I ask you, and don't spoil my plans." So saying, he hobbled out of the bank and up the street, to where a covered wagon was standing, with a boy of about seventeen years holding the reins.

The old soldier got in the vehicle with little difficulty, notwithstanding his disability. "Drive on," said he to the boy, "and stand near the bank-door, so that, without being seen myself, I can see who goes out. You stand by to jump when I tell you, and shadow the man I am after. In the mean time I will unbuckle this strap and relieve my leg, which is a great deal cramped."

The wagon remained near the bank-door for half an hour, and Dare began to fear that his man had escaped. At length he saw through the crack in the curtain the person he wanted, and exclaimed to his companion, "That's the man coming down the steps, with a bell-crowned hat and camlet cloak. Follow him, and never leave him until you can identify the men he goes to meet."

The clerk stopped a moment at the foot of the bank-steps, and looked up and down the street. He then walked slowly to Fulton Street, and then more rapidly to Front Street, where he stopped before the sailor's boarding-house we previously had occasion to visit.

The boy was at the clerk's heels, never once losing sight of him, although the shades of night were rapidly falling over the city, the dingy lamps, even when lighted, seeming but to make darkness visible.

When the clerk reached his destination he looked all around him, and then suddenly darted in at the front door, but, quick as lightning, the boy was at his side as he reached the landing.

"Can you tell me," said the boy, "where I can find Joe Dobbs? I've a message for him."

"I don't know any such person," said the clerk.

"All right," said the boy, "I'll find him," and he went along the dark entry, looking at the doors, but all the time keeping close watch upon the clerk.

The latter knocked at the third door. "Come in," said a rough voice. And in went the clerk, closing the door behind him.

The boy was at the door as soon as it closed, and his eye was at the key-hole. He could see nearly everything in the room and hear most of the conversation, for the door was not very thick.

Two stout, sailor-looking fellows were playing cards at a table. "Hello!" said one, "here's old milksop come for his swag. Well, you are quick on the trigger, and no mistake. Well, old fellow, we've shipped for forren parts, and if you take a hand in the game I'd like to win a outfit from your share of the swag."

"No," said the clerk, "I never play; I've better uses for my money."

"Ah, yes!" said the other, "I know the milksop's a Sunday-school teacher; has a gal that teaches in the same school; walks out with her on the Battery Sunday evenin' with a prayer-book stickin' outer his pocket; picks up a hankercher some one has dropped, an' advertises it in the papers, with his name in big letters, an' all the people say, 'What a nice man!' Who'd suspect that you'd ever rob a till?"

"I have no time to talk nonsense," said the clerk. "I want my money. I have risked my life to help you, and I don't want to be kept waiting. I was sent here for it."

"Sent here!" said the man. "Who in thunder sent you here?"

"Why," said the clerk, "an old soldier—a Frenchman—a large man with only one leg, one arm, and one eye."

"Ah! I see," said the other, "the chief out on a lark. So he sent you! Well, he means business. Just you sit down and wait till

Ben the Joker comes in." And, looking at a huge silver watch, he said, "Ben'll be here in exactly half an hour."

The clerk sat down on a sea-chest, and the two men went on with their game. The boy at the key-hole started for the street and ran like a deer to Allan Dare's quarters, which he reached in about ten minutes, to find Allan waiting for him dressed as a drayman.

The boy quickly told his story, and informed Dare that the other man would be at the rendezvous in half an hour.

Dare wrote on a card, "Give the boy ten stout men, with orders to arrest those he points out."

The boy fairly flew to the police office, and, arriving there, found the chief just about departing for home. He gave him the card, and the chief summoned his assistant. "Ten good men at once. Is the van at the door?"

"Yes, sir," was the reply.

"Then call the captain of the watch."

It was about the time when the captain of the watch came to get his orders for the night, and there were a number of policemen waiting about.

As the captain of the watch came in the chief said, "Take this boy for a guide; arrest those he points out. Don't let the driver spare his horses—quick, be off!"

In less than five minutes the well-loaded van was off at a rattling pace, and very soon stopped a short distance from the Front Street boarding-house, where they all got out.

The boy led the way, the policemen following, until he stopped at the door which he had seen the clerk enter. Loud and boisterous conversation was going on inside.

The captain of the watch forced the door open, and four persons stood revealed—one of them the clerk.

In another instant the candles were blown out, but the policemen crowded into the room and a scuffle ensued. Knock-downs were given and taken, and in the excitement policemen clubbed each other. The boy rushed into an adjoining room, the door of which had been opened by the occupant when he heard the noise, and seized a couple of lighted candles, with which he returned to the scene of action.

There he witnessed a bloody spectacle. Men were on the floor bathed in blood, while the three thieves were standing in a corner, wielding heavy clubs and bringing down a policeman at every blow. The clerk had crawled under the table.

When the light appeared, the outlaws made a rush for the door over the bodies of the prostrate policemen, and might have made good their escape but for a stalwart drayman, who at that moment appeared at the opening and laid the foremost villain senseless with a blow of his fist, caught the upraised club of the second and thrust him violently against the wall, injuring him so much that he could not move. The third man seemed to be appalled at the fate of his comrades, and the drayman, seizing him by the collar, clasped on his wrists a pair of handcuffs before he was aware of it. Then, turning to the police officer, he said, "Captain, take care of this fellow. The others need no one to take care of them just now."

He then hauled the trembling clerk from under the table, saying, "Come, bub, the swag ain't yourn yet."

"My God!" exclaimed the clerk, "I'm lost."

"Yes," said the drayman, "you are. And now, captain, if you'll allow me to advise you, I'd leave a guard here and see that nothing is touched until the chief of police comes. Now, I'll bid you good-night. If I happen to be in your neighborhood when you are having a scrimmage at any future time, I'll step in and lend a hand."

The captain, who was bleeding profusely from a blow received from one of his own men, managed to express his thanks, and added, "I only wish you had been here a little earlier."

The drayman went to a wagon stationed at a post near by, followed by the boy, who jumped upon the front seat and took the reins.

"To the police station," said the drayman. As soon as they arrived there the drayman walked into the chief's office, and was met by that functionary, who called out, "What do you want, man, and how dare you come in without knocking?"

"I dare anything, your honor," said the other. "My name is Dare."

"Ah!" said the chief, "sold again; and yet I might have known if I had thought a moment. I'm getting old, Dare, and you'll have to take my place."

"I couldn't be half as useful there as I am now," said Allan. "We will make a good team in the end. I bring you news that will make your heart glad. The three bank robbers are all in the hands of the police, but in all my life I never saw ten men get such a drubbing as yours did from those three fellows. If I had not stepped in as I did the rascals might have escaped."

Allan Dare then gave the chief an account of the whole affair. "Now," said he, "keep the door of the room locked and the windows nailed down, and you and I will inspect the place to-morrow. I must get away before the policemen return, for I don't want them to see me. They think I am an angel who came to help them in their extremity. I will communicate with you to-morrow."

Dare jumped into the wagon, and was soon at his quarters.

"Now, Gabrielle," said he to the boy, "go home to your mother, get your supper, and keep a watch over Jane Ross. You've done well to-day. Here is twenty dollars; you shall have more hereafter."

"Thank you, sir," said Gabrielle as she drove off.

Allan Dare now prepared himself for a good night's rest.

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## CHAPTER XIX.

### THE STRONG-BOXES.

THE news of the capture of the bank-robbers set New York all ablaze. The chief of police was more than rewarded for former censure by the glowing tributes of the press to his energy and ability. Hundreds of citizens called to congratulate him upon his late success. Every one felt that New York would now enjoy comparative immunity from thieving operations for some time to come. It was the popular impression that the whole gang had been captured.

The four thieves, after an examination before the recorder, were committed to await the action of the grand jury.

The morning after the capture of the robbers, the chief of police called at Allan Dare's quarters, and found him dressed as the Rev. Mr. Raymond.

"Dare," said the chief, "if I am seen associating with you in that rig I shall lose my reputation for consistency. People will say I am deceitful, as I have always been considered hostile to the clergy. I wish you would wear some other dress."

"Excuse me," said Dare, "but if you want to deceive people, put on the surplice. Most people, women especially, believe in the clergy, and this disguise of mine is very difficult to penetrate."

They stepped into a close carriage and were driven to the sailo

boarding-house in Front Street. They entered the room where the robbers had been captured, and the policeman in charge was directed to await orders below.

In this room were three miserable cot-beds, a pine table, three chairs, and three seamen's chests. The house was one of the places where sailors are taken in and swindled out of their hard-earned wages. One would hardly look for bank-robbers in such a place, or think the fraternity would dare to trust themselves in the hands of greater rascals than themselves.

There was nothing in the chests but seamen's clothing, and an examination of the walls, floors, ceiling, etc., afforded no evidence against the prisoners.

"It is evident," said Dare, "that the master-hand holds all the money, and for the present it is out of our reach. Let us have the landlord up, sir."

The landlord, who soon appeared, was by no means prepossessing in appearance, yet his testimony was straightforward enough.

It seems the three men had only been a week in his house, and claimed to have come from Philadelphia. They were well-behaved, paid their bills, and said they wished to sail out of New York, as wages were higher than in Philadelphia. They had shipped on board a vessel bound to Bremen, and had worked all that day getting in cargo.

"By heavens!" said Dare, after the landlord had withdrawn, "these are expert thieves; they have left no tracks, but their connection with the clerk will convict them."

The chief and Dare went away disappointed, leaving the boarding-house under surveillance of the police.

"What astonishes me most," said Dare, "is how quietly the rogues have disposed of their booty; but I'll find it yet. My force is too small, but in a week or two I shall have a couple of good detectives here who worked for me in Paris; then I shall get along better."

That evening Mr. Eton was reading from the paper additional particulars of the capture of the robbers to his wife, who listened with great attention.

"La, darling!" said she, "what a wonderful man the drayman, that knocked down the three robbers after they had killed all the police, must be!"

"No one was killed, Fanny; the ten policemen were whipped by the three men, that's all."



"Oh! is that all?" said Mrs. Eton. "Then I don't want to hear any more about it. I think the police ought all to be killed, because they haven't found my diamonds. It was easy enough for them to find that horrid old Mrs. Ruggles's diamonds and Mrs. Vandeußen's pearls. It would have been so interesting to see my name mentioned in the papers, telling how the diamonds had been found, and people would ask a thousand questions, and get me to show them the diamonds."

"Yes," muttered Eton to himself, "and find they were not set open. Fanny," he said, "if you whine any more over those diamonds I won't give you the set I have ordered from Paris. Haven't I told you that the house of Eton & Co. can stand the loss of a dozen sets like the one lost without minding it?" Considering the kind of diamonds they were, this was no doubt true enough.

"Ah, you dear old darling!" said Mrs. Eton, "you are too good to me, and I can't tell you how much I love you. I wonder Mr. Deville and Mr. May don't come to dinner. The soup is getting cold. You asked them to come at five precisely—didn't you, dear?"

"Yes," he said, "at five precisely." Just then the gentlemen in question were announced.

The dinner went off well, as Mrs. Eton's dinners generally did. Everything was well served, the conversation spirited, and Mr. Eton drank his sherry with so much gusto that his tongue quite ran away with him. He talked much about the robbers, and how he would like to see any of them try to rob *him*, stating that in his counting-house was a strong-box that would defy any burglar in the world.

"But," said Deville, "these are not ordinary robbers; they defy all the locks and bolts made in the country. I believe I have the only strong-box proof against fire and burglars in New York. I imported it from England. I don't believe in your American articles."

"I'll bet you ten dollars," said Mr. Eton, "that mine is stronger than yours."

"I never bet," said Deville, "but, if you like, you can examine mine and I'll examine yours, and Mr. May shall be umpire. If the decision is against me, I will give Mrs. Eton the handsomest supper the Maison d'Or can provide."

"Good!" said Eton, "and we'll examine the safes to-morrow."

er dinner the visitors excused themselves, as they had an engagement to attend the theatre.

When they were gone Mrs. Eton exclaimed: "You dear old Fanny! don't you know that Mr. Deville gives the most beautiful suppers in New York? If you lose the bet you will have to give a hundred-dollar supper."

"Oh, shaw! Fanny," said Mr. Eton. "Why, I can buy Deville out. The house of Eton & Co. could pay for twenty suppers where he could pay for one; besides, I don't expect to lose."

"I hope not, darling, for Mr. Deville is so vain about anything; but I want my darling to have everything better than any one else. But remember, pet, if you should by any possibility lose, you must give a splendid supper for the credit of the house of Eton, for it will be the talk of the town."

"You shall have it your own way, Fanny; the house of Eton won't allow any one to excel it."

The next day at noon Messrs. Eton, Deville, and May went to Eton's counting-house to examine the strong-box. Mr. Eton unlocked the outer door of the vault, which was solidly built of iron. Inside this was a massive iron chest studded with locks and bolts, which Mr. Eton opened—also proud to display the wealth which was piled inside, which consisted of bales of bank-notes and bags of gold and silver.

"Here," said Mr. Eton, "let the burglars get the keys of that chest if they can. I always carry them in my pocket." So saying, he unlocked the chest with a self-satisfied air.

"Yes," said Deville, "your strong-box is a very fine one, and very secure against burglars, but you'll say mine is a better one when you see it."

"Then let us go and take a look at it," said Eton, "and, if I find it a better strong-box than mine, I will pay for the supper. Don't forget my additional security in the shape of a watchman, with a double-barreled gun loaded with buckshot."

"Mr. May will decide," said Deville, "and if I lose I shall pay for my entertainment with more than pleasure, for I have been given an excuse to ask Mrs. Eton to a supper for a long time."

They proceeded to Deville's bank, which was elegantly fitted out in a style before unknown in New York—mahogany counters and brass railings, and wire net-work to keep off thieves.

Deville's strong-box was inclosed in a brick vault with double walls of iron. It was a huge affair, covered with thick iron plates,

and reaching half-way to the top of the vault. Three doors opened into the box, which was divided into as many sections, separated by partitions filled in with asbestos, as a guard against fire. All three doors locked with a spring, but there was no key-hole visible by which they could be unlocked. No one but Deville himself knew the secret. He had an iron chest, of the ordinary pattern then in vogue, in which money was deposited for the current expenses of the day, of which his cashier kept the key.

"All very good," said Mr. Eton, "but you haven't a stone vault like mine to cover your safe."

"I have something better," replied Deville. "You see this large affair over the strong-box? Well, that acts like a candle extinguisher. It is made of the best iron, and no ordinary instrument can cut it. I have a little steam-engine that lowers it over the safe at night and hoists it up again in the morning. As it weighs four tons, no burglars would be likely to lift it off."

"Ah, yes," cried Eton, "but why can't the robbers get up steam and hoist it off?"

"Because," said Deville, "I set an alarm-clock at night before I go home, and any one who tampers with the cover will start an alarm that can be heard half a mile off. Besides, to guard against all accidents, I take off the cylinder-head from the engine, and my boy carries it to my lodgings every night, where I lock it up in an iron chest. I explain this to all my depositors, and I have more of them than any other banker in New York."

"I'm afraid I shall have to pay for the supper," said Mr. Eton; "but, Deville, my boy," slapping him familiarly on the back, "I can beat you in one thing. My safe has in it at this time more money than yours. The house of Eton & Co. can't be beaten there."

"If you will tell me what you have," said Deville, "and, of course, I'll take your word for it, I'll show you my accumulation."

"I have three hundred thousand dollars in that box of mine," said Mr. Eton, proudly. "Since that robbery of Morton's bank (by which I came near losing a large amount) I prefer not to trust my money in banks."

"But," said Deville, "no one lost a cent by Mr. Morton, and his credit is higher than ever."

"Humph! yes," said Mr. Eton, "but I didn't go back to him. Now tell me, Deville, honor bright, how much of your own money have you in your box?"

"I have over four hundred thousand dollars of my own in bank-notes," replied Deville, "seventy thousand in Erie Canal stock, sixty thousand dollars in gold, and six hundred thousand on deposit; and I can not tell you how many bonds there are belonging to other people."

The merchant opened his eyes in astonishment. "I always predicted," said he, "that you would be the leading banker in New York some day, and now I am satisfied of it." Mr. Eton now invited the two gentlemen home with him to luncheon, and, when there, told his wife of the wonderful safe he had seen, but said nothing about the money.

When the company had gone, Mr. Eton said to his wife, "Fanny, the house of Eton & Co. could buy Deville out in half an hour; he is all safe and brass railings."

"Yes," replied the fond wife, "no one could beat my darling at anything." Eton kissed her and went back to his strong-box and money-bags, while his beloved Fanny went up-stairs to write a note to Deville, congratulating him on his success over her old bear, and felicitating herself on the coming supper at the *Maison d'Or*.

Then she ordered her carriage and spent the afternoon in dawdling over store-counters, and bought a magnificent dress at Vandervoort & Flandin's in which to appear at the supper.

In the end Mr. Eton will find the promised supper an expensive entertainment, although, no doubt, he would maintain that the house of Eton & Co. could stand twenty suppers of the same kind without wincing.

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## CHAPTER XX.

### AN INGENIOUS STRATAGEM.

THE "nine days' wonder" about the robberies began to subside, and the papers were anxiously looking around for something new.

Mrs. Vandensen and her daughter had been gone more than a fortnight, and Mr. Vandensen had received no news from them, so that he was beginning to feel uneasy. Mr. Faney, his chief clerk, shared his uneasiness, for he was very much attached to Miss Vandensen, who reciprocated the feeling. It was considered a settled thing in the family, and, now that the female portion were away, Mr. Frederic Faney stayed at the Vandensen house to keep the old

gentleman company, and discuss with him the prospective profits of the gas company.

It was the custom of this solid man of New York to breakfast at eight, to smoke his cigar, and then drive to his office in Maiden Lane—a long ride that gave the people an opportunity to look at and bow to the great enlightener, and gave him an opportunity to bow in return.

On the morning of which we write, Mr. Vandeußen and Mr. Faney were discussing the probable reasons for this silence of the wife and daughter, and expressing a fear that something serious had happened.

"Who knows," said Mr. Vandeußen, "~~but what~~ <sup>that</sup> they may <sup>not</sup> have been taken ill on the road, with no one to help them—"

"Or capsized in a stage-coach and broken some of their limbs?" said Mr. Faney.

"Or that my daughter has been taken sick with measles, and is now in the hands of some country doctor—"

"Or," said Mr. Faney, "they may have fallen in with some agreeable gentlemen on the way and forgotten us." Here he groaned inwardly.

"I ought to have sent three or four carrier pigeons with them in a cage," said Mr. Vandeußen, "and then they could have sent us messages from time to time. The mails are so slow they take twelve hours to come from Philadelphia. If I don't hear very soon I shall put all my business in Mr. Birch's hands and start off to join them."

"I hope in that case you will let me accompany you," said Mr. Faney, "for, in case of an emergency, I could be very useful."

"Why, of course," replied Mr. Vandeußen. "I should as soon think of flying as leaving you behind. Who would I have to write for me, and make out my instructions to Mr. Birch? But it makes me nervous to talk about the matter. Let us go down to the office, and perhaps we may get letters. The mail will be here by noon." So they turned to depart, but not before Mr. Frederic Faney had looked in the glass to adjust the beautiful curling locks that Miss Vandeußen thought so much of.

Just then came a loud knock at the street-door, and the servant, who answered the summons, reported, "A gentleman just from missus, sir, wishes to see you at once."

Mr. Vandeußen rushed to the hall, followed by Mr. Faney, and there they found a tall stranger in a traveling dress. He was a

man of about fifty, with gray hair and wearing gold spectacles. In one hand he carried a leather valise and in the other a gold-headed cane. His appearance was that of intense respectability, although his dress was a little soiled with travel.

The stranger bowed low to Mr. Vandeußen—who would not bow down to so great a man?—and said, “I am the bearer of a letter from Mrs. Vandeußen, which she considered so important that she did not wish to risk it in the mail, to say nothing of the fact that you would get it some hours sooner if I brought it.”

Mr. Vandeußen tore open the letter that the stranger handed him and read but a few words, when he sank upon a chair, exclaiming, “My God, this is terrible! Eugenie is dying! What shall we do?” With these words he burst into tears.

“Not quite so bad as that, sir,” said the stranger, “although she was very low when I left, and Mrs. Vandeußen was obliged to stop at Cincinnati. The physician said that your daughter’s case is a very bad one, but I do not think he considers it hopeless.”

“How long were you coming here, sir?” asked Mr. Vandeußen. “Excuse me if I have failed to show you proper courtesy in not asking you into the parlor—but this blow has upset me entirely. Walk in, sir.”

“You need make no excuses,” said the stranger. “I can sympathize in the grief of a father; but if you wish to see your daughter alive you must hasten to her. I was seven days getting here, the roads are in such bad condition.”

“When does the steamboat start for South Amboy?” inquired Mr. Vandeußen.

“In one hour,” said the stranger.

“Here, James,” said Mr. Vandeußen to the servant, “pack my valise at once; put in clothes enough for ten days, and bring down Mr. Fane’s valise also. Make haste! we must be off immediately.”

“Shall I have time to stop for a moment in Maiden Lane to deliver a message at my office?” asked Mr. Vandeußen of the stranger.

“I fear not,” was the reply; “that would lose you your passage, and you would have to wait over till Monday, as there is no boat on Sunday, and you would lose the connection at Wheeling. No, sir, I fear it would never do. Your daughter cries for you all the time.”

“Then,” said Mr. Vandeußen, “let us be off. Frederic, write

two lines to Mr. Birch ; tell him to take charge, and say that I will write him from Cincinnati what to do in my absence."

The letter which Mr. Vandeußen had received ran as follows :

"CINCINNATI, May 4, 18—.

"MY DEAR HUSBAND : Come to us as soon as possible, no matter what the sacrifice. Our darling Eugenie *is dying*, and I am almost broken-hearted. The journey was too much for the dear child. She sank under the fatigue, and I am now at an inn without a friend and without a comfort.

"I have intrusted this to a kind stranger, who promises to deliver it to you the moment he arrives in New York. He has been of great service to me. Oh, husband, hasten, or you will never see your dear child again !

Your heart-broken

"EMMA."

The stranger, whose name was Smith, offered to deliver to Mr. Birch the letter of instructions so hastily written, and his offer was gratefully accepted by the sorrowing father. "If ever you need a friend," said he, "don't fail to call upon me."

The horses were urged to their utmost speed, and Mr. Vandeußen and his chief clerk reached the South Amboy boat just five minutes before she left the pier.

No sooner had Mr. Vandeußen and his companion departed than the stranger followed in the hack which had brought him. At Grand Street he alighted and dismissed the hackman. He walked down that street until the hackman had got out of sight, and then returned to Broadway, and walked along that street until he reached the restaurant on the corner of Leonard Street. Here he ordered breakfast in a private room, and also materials for writing.

When he was shown into his room he took out the letter to Mr. Birch, which had been hurriedly sealed with a wafer, and, slipping a penknife carefully under the seal, opened the letter and read as follows :

"MY DEAR MR. BIRCH : I have just received the most painful news. My daughter is dying on the road, in Cincinnati. I must take this morning's steamer or never see her again. Take entire charge of the office until my return, and conduct matters just as I would. I will write daily when I reach my journey's end.

I have but a few moments to reach the steamboat, and must say farewell.

Yours truly,

"H. VANDEUSEN."

After that the stranger finished a hearty breakfast, and, when the breakfast things were removed, he locked the door and sat down to write with Mr. Vandeußen's letter before him, written in the clerkly hand of Mr. Frederic Faney.

The stranger wrote as follows, copying the style of writing as if it had been his own :

"MY DEAR MR. BIRCH : Don't judge me harshly. I am compelled to leave. Troubles are culminating so rapidly that, did I not make my escape now, I could not do so at all.

"To-morrow the gas stock will be worthless, so I do you a kindness by advising you to sell to-day for what you can get.

"It will be of no use to try ~~and~~ find me, as no one knows whither I am gone. There's my house ; let them take that and pay themselves.

H. VANDEUSEN."

The stranger folded and sealed this precious document, put it into his pocket, and, taking his valise and cane, walked up Broadway to Maiden Lane and so on to the office of the Manhattan Gas Company, where some twenty people were assembled outside the door.

"What is the matter ?" said the stranger to a by-stander. "Why is the office closed ?"

It was one of the clerks who answered : "Mr. Faney, the head clerk, comes down every morning to open the doors. He is never later than half-past nine, and it is now after eleven. We are waiting for him to let us in. The president is always here by ten. I don't know what to make of it."

Then the stranger knew that Mr. Faney had carried off the key of the office in his pocket, and it would be necessary to pick the lock to enter the office.

"Here is a note," said the stranger to the clerk, "addressed to Mr. Birch. A gentleman asked me to leave it at the office as I passed."

"Mr. Birch went to Philadelphia yesterday," said the clerk, "and will not return for two days ; but I'll give him the note when he comes back."

So the stranger walked away, leaving the clerks waiting for Mr.



Frederic Faney, who by this time had doubtless discovered that he had carried off the office-key, and was not a little perplexed thereby.

The stranger now called a hack and drove to the house in Broadway just above Chambers Street, and, telling the driver to wait twenty minutes for him, jumped out, keeping his back to the driver and leaving his valise in the carriage. Had the driver seen his face he would not have recognized him, for the stranger's hair was now chestnut-color instead of gray.

The stranger went straight to the house of the Carroltons, where he found Flossy in the parlor, dressed in white muslin trimmed with lace, and with a bouquet of damask roses in her belt. Her beautiful arms were bare, while her wrists were adorned with the handsome bracelets Robert le Diable had sent her.

Flossy jumped up and ran toward him. "What do you think of me now, Mr. Robert? Aren't I lovely? aren't I a little kitten?"

"Yes," said Robert, "the loveliest kitten I ever saw. You will set all New York in a blaze when they see more of you."

"Oh!" said Flossy, "you ought to have seen my get-up. The other evening, when papa and I went out driving, the people all stared and looked after our carriage as we passed. I am sure they admired me. I owe it all to you for sending Madame Bobinet here with those beautiful dresses. I wore my carriage costume of camel's-hair cloth in pink, kilted skirt of *faille* set to a lining of silesia, the overdress forming a shirred tunic opening away from the *tournure*, with a basque-waist pointed in front and square in the back, the sleeves finished with a *lingerie* of *crêpe lisse*. Only think! sixteen yards of *faille* twenty-two inches wide, and six yards of cloth forty-eight inches wide, in that dress! Then around my neck the loveliest little white fur collar you ever saw, topped off with the cunningest poke-bonnet in the world, with a long ostrich-plume in very light blue and salmon-pink. And then my parasol—salmon-pink trimmed with Valenciennes—and light salmon-colored gloves! What do you think of all that? Papa said, 'Flossy, you will ruin me if you dress in this extravagant style'—when *you* sent me all my pretty things! I laughed in his face, and he laughed too."

So Flossy ran on, and would have continued to do so indefinitely had not Robert stopped her.

"I am satisfied, Miss Flossy," said he, "that you will look beautiful in anything you put on. I thought you a perfect picture the first time I ever saw you, but when you were dressed in all those

frills and furbelows you must have been enchanting. You shall put it all on for my benefit some day, and I will judge for myself. Order what you please from Madame Bobinet, and I will pay the bills. But now I want to see your father on private business."

Flossy tripped off to call her father, and Carrolton soon appeared with a pen behind his ear, for he had been writing in his bedroom, and bade Robert good-morning.

"How much gas stock did you buy yesterday, Mr. Carrolton?"

"Twelve thousand dollars' worth," was the reply.

"Well," said Robert, "get down to the street at once; there's the devil to pay in gas stock. By three o'clock it will be down to par; to-morrow you can buy it for thirty dollars a share. Now carry out my instructions to the letter. From how many brokers did you purchase yesterday?"

"From seven altogether," said Carrolton.

"Then divide the twelve thousand dollars' worth of stock into seven parts, and go to each broker and order him to sell your shares at once before the stock falls. Tell them that you believe the gas company doesn't amount to a row of pins; that the president has disappeared, and the vice-president can't be found; that the company's office is closed, and even the clerks can't get in. Leave the rest to me. Now be off, sharp, and see what a row there'll be in an hour or two. Sell out at the best price you can get, but sell anyhow."

With these words Robert disappeared. The hackman had waited in vain for his fare, but at last drove off, consoling himself with the dollar he had received and the leather valise left in the carriage, for, although he found it empty, it more than paid for his loss of time.

Shortly after Robert's visit Carrolton sought the office of Jacobs & Co., brokers, and said to them, "I want to sell my gas stock. What is the selling-price this morning?"

"132," said the broker.

"Then," said Carrolton, "you may have mine for 130."

"Done!" said the broker. "I can afford to take it at that price, as there are parties after it; but I think it will be higher to-morrow."

As Carrolton walked out of the office he said, knowingly, "Gas stock will never touch 120 again."

The broker laughed. "There's a fool for you," remarked he

to his clerk ; " he might have got three per cent more for his stock just as easy as rolling off a log."

Carrolton played the same game in each of the broker's offices where he had purchased the stock, but when he came to the seventh broker he asked but 128 for his stock.

" My God, sir ! " exclaimed the broker, " you are shaving yourself terribly. Why, the stock will be up to 134 by to-morrow," and he looked at Carrolton as if he thought he must be deranged.

" Well, that's all I ask," said Carrolton. " I don't want to take advantage of you."

The idea of any one taking advantage of a broker was so good that the man could hardly help laughing in Carrolton's face. He made all haste to hand out the money and secure the certificates of stock.

When the transaction was concluded Carrolton remarked, " Mr. Shavem, you may think me green, but by this time to-morrow gas stock won't be worth thirty dollars a share." And he walked away.

" The man's crazy," exclaimed Mr. Shavem. " What in thunder can he mean ? Is it possible there's anything wrong about the stock ? Here, John," to the office-boy, " run up to the gas company's office and see if anything new is up."

The boy, glad of any excuse to get out of the office, went off at steamboat speed. Arrived at the gas office, he found a crowd assembled around the doors, which were still closed, while the clerks were quite unable to answer the questions showered upon them by the excited crowd.

" What's the office shut for ? " asked one. " Is there a bust-up, or is old Vandensen dead ? "

" I have a draft here," said another. " It must be paid before three o'clock."

" I'd break the d—d door down," said a red-faced, choleric-looking man.

" Has any one been to Vandensen's house to see if he is sick ? " inquired another.

" He and his chief clerk wouldn't both be sick at the same time," said another ; " and if the clerk could not come down and unlock the door, he could send down."

At that moment the cashier appeared, pale and breathless. He stated to two of the directors, who had come to the office, that while Mr. Vandensen was at breakfast a stranger called to see him, and, after a few minutes' conversation, he ordered his own and his

chief clerk's valises packed, and drove off with great speed to the South Amboy steamboat.

Then the crowd vociferated, "Break down the doors! Absconded with the people's money!" But by this time three or four constables were on hand, and the persons disposed to make a riot were overawed.

Just then a clerk came forward and said to one of the directors: "Here's a note, sir, from Mr. Vandeußen to Mr. Birch. It was left here about eleven o'clock by a gentleman."

"This is so important a matter," said the director, "that I will take the responsibility of opening the note." This he accordingly did in presence of the crowd, who looked anxiously on, for, although few held any gas stock, all thought themselves entitled to meddle in the business.

When the director read the note he turned white as a sheet, but, recovering himself by a mighty effort, he said to the crowd, "It's all right. Mr. Vandeußen and his chief clerk have gone to Philadelphia, and he sent the key to Mr. Birch, whom he thought would be at the office. That's all there is about it. Now, gentlemen, disperse quietly. There has been great excitement without any cause." Taking the other director by the arm, he said, "Let us go."

As soon as they were clear of the throng the first director said to his companion, "This is bad business; read that note. We must get rid of our stock as soon as possible, or we are ruined."

"Good heavens!" exclaimed his friend, "what a crash there will be! Think of what a reputation that man held in the community! Who can be trusted? Let's get into the street and see if we can save ourselves."

But there were sharp eyes in the crowd that had noticed the director's change of countenance, and among them were brokers. These persons communicated their doubts and suspicions to others, so that in half an hour there was a panic in the street. The directors soon found it impossible to sell any stock, as nobody wanted to buy.

The board of directors met, and remained in council until twelve o'clock that night. Mr. Vandeußen's letter to Mr. Birch was read and reread. The only conclusion that could be arrived at was that Vandeußen had absconded, and would probably sail for Europe to meet his family and enjoy his ill-gotten wealth without danger of molestation.

Among so many directors it was impossible for the letter to remain a secret long, and next day the substance of it was published in one of the papers. People forgot all about the late robberies, and could talk of nothing but the gas company, the stock of which was quoted nominally at thirty dollars a share, but with no buyers.

Yes, there was one buyer. A portly gentleman of about fifty, with a red face and a red nose, appeared upon the scene.

"I don't care," said he, "what Vandeusen may have done, as long as he hasn't run away with the gas-works and the pipes. This panic is foolish; people ought to hold on and trust to the stock going up again."

"Now's your time to buy, then," said a broker to whom these remarks were addressed. "There are over a million shares in the market, and you can buy them for thirty dollars a share—a fall of one hundred and two dollars."

"How much have you to sell?" queried the red-nosed man.

"In half an hour I could collect perhaps twenty thousand shares."

"Then," said the other, "I'll help the stock to go up by taking five thousand shares at once at thirty dollars."

"But that wouldn't help it much," said the broker. "People wouldn't mind that."

"Well, give it to me at any rate?" said the red-faced man, as he wiped the perspiration from his bald head.

"For what name shall I say?" said the broker.

"No name," replied the stranger, "for if I turn out to be a fool I don't want any one to know it."

The transaction was soon completed, and the red-nosed man paid in certified checks the amount due, and received the certificates of stock.

"A fool and his money are soon parted," thought the broker.

The red-nosed individual went into another establishment and pursued a somewhat similar course, only he declared that he believed the stock would be up to sixty in ten days.

"I think very likely," said the broker, "but I have ten thousand shares for sale at thirty. Better buy, sir; it will run the stock up."

"Give me five thousand shares," said the red-nosed man, trembling with excitement, and sitting down so suddenly that the chair broke under him, letting him fall on the floor. The broker and his assistant helped him up. He paid for the certificates as before, refusing to give his name.

"That man's friends," commented the broker, "ought to look out for him. He must have lots of money. I hope he'll call often."

The red-faced gentleman kept on his course until he had bought thirty thousand shares—all the stock that was in the market—and then he disappeared; in fact, he was never heard of again "on the street." If the stock should now go up again to its original figure, he would clear over three millions of dollars—but this was not considered within the bounds of probability.

In the mean while the gas company's office had been entered by the aid of a locksmith. The clerks resumed their places, and the books were all laid out in the directors' room, in the presence of the assembled conclave.

Everything in the books seemed to be correct. Then the directors visited the banks, and found that the deposits there agreed exactly with the showing in the bank-books of the company. Where was the sense in this panic? There were nearly two millions of dollars to their credit, while the gas-works, pipes, etc., represented half a million more.

The letter of Vandeußen's was the only thing that appeared against the company, and this had evidently been the cause of all the mischief.

Next day there appeared in the papers an exhibit of the affairs of the gas company, which, as far as figures went, was very satisfactory; but the editors commented on the fact that Mr. Vandeußen, the president, and Mr. Faney, the secretary, had mysteriously disappeared, leaving a very extraordinary letter that did not agree at all with the rose-colored statements of the directors.

Mr. Vandeußen and his companion, although they made the greatest exertions, did not reach Wheeling until the fifth day after leaving New York—such was the state of the roads.

Here Mr. Vandeußen wrote to Mr. Birch and gave him an account of his journey, saying that he should go by steamboat to Cincinnati, and there hoped to find matters better than he anticipated when leaving home. He might even go to New Orleans. Mr. Vandeußen said nothing about his wife and daughter, taking it for granted that Mr. Birch would understand it all from his former letter. He then gave some instructions in regard to certain contracts that would soon be completed, and added that he would write more fully from Cincinnati.

In a postscript he said, "Faney brought the office-key with

him in the hurry of his departure, but there is a duplicate which my steward knows all about, and no doubt he gave it to you."

The gas company had been going along very quietly when Mr. Birch, who had now returned from Philadelphia, got this letter, which bothered him almost as much as the forged document he had previously received. It was written in Mr. Faney's hand, and signed by Mr. Vandausen in his peculiar bold style. He compared the two letters, but could detect no difference. He had no idea what Mr. Vandausen could want in Cincinnati, and was forced to the conclusion that his poor friend had gone deranged.

The editor of the "Post" was of the same opinion, and published the letter for the benefit of the community, thanking Providence that the gas company was in such good hands, now that the honored president was laboring under temporary delusion. The paper spoke of the great loss that so many holders of stock had experienced by selling out without waiting for an explanation, but said nothing about the gentleman with the red nose, who had shown his faith in the gas company by gathering up all the stock he could lay his hands on.

Meanwhile, Mr. Vandausen arrived safely in Cincinnati, and hurried to the hotel, where he expected to find his daughter in a precarious condition, and was told by the landlord that the ladies had stayed at his house but one night, that both were in excellent spirits, and had taken passage in the Southern Belle for New Orleans.

Mr. Vandausen was thunderstruck. "Why," said he, "they left here on the second, and I received a letter, dated the fourth, from my wife, in which she said that my daughter was here in a dying condition."

"That letter was never written by your wife," said the landlord. "It's a hoax."

"Here's the letter," said Mr. Vandausen. "Frederic, isn't this Mrs. Vandausen's handwriting?"

"Yes, sir," said Faney; "but stop, sir—let me see. The words are more cramped than Mrs. Vandausen's—it's a forgery. I see it all now. There's some design in this—perhaps a plan to rob your house in your absence. I didn't at all like the looks of the man who brought the letter."

"Yet," said Vandausen, "he looked like a gentleman—but I see it all now. Frederic, we must get back as soon as we can."

The two gentlemen started for New York that evening, and, after six days' hard travel, they arrived at home.

When they rang the bell at the Vandeußen mansion it was answered by the steward, who was a most miserable-looking object. He had fallen away in size, his eyes were sunken, and he wore a wet napkin around his head. When he saw his master he fell back as if appalled. "Good Lord, sir!" said he, "we all thought you had committed suicide or something worse. And the way the papers have been abusin' you, sir, is scandalous."

"Abusing *me*, James!" exclaimed Mr. Vandeußen in astonishment. "What in the world can they find to abuse me about?"

"Why, sir, people came here and was goin' to pull down the house—all about them gas-works, and the gas-stocks is all gone down to nothink; and they said, sir, as how you'd absquonded with all the money, and I don't know what they didn't say. Oh! it's been dreadful, sir, and I've almost gone crazy."

"Why, mercy on us, Frederic, what can all this mean? Get us some breakfast at once, James, and let us get to the office as soon as possible."

When the two travelers, after a hurried toilet, came down to breakfast, they found a pile of newspapers. As James brought in the coffee he said, "It's all there, sir; you can read it as you eat, but it'll break your heart, as it did mine, to see how they've abused you."

They were too much horrified by what they read to have any appetite for breakfast. When the carriage was announced they entered it, and drove as rapidly as possible to the office.

Everybody recognized the stately carriage as it drove rapidly down Broadway, although its occupants were concealed by the curtains, and more than once stones were thrown at it, which, although they fortunately did no injury, sufficiently indicated the drift of public sentiment.

As Mr. Vandeußen entered the office the clerks all rose from their desks, and, as he passed into the private office, the vice-president met him with extended hand.

"What does all this mean?" said Mr. Birch. "Your absence has raised a terrible commotion. The stock for three days was down to thirty, and only after a careful investigation into the affairs of the company were the public satisfied that the concern was not bankrupt. It has now gone up to par, and there it will stick until you explain."

"Explain!" cried Mr. Vandeußen. "I left a letter for you when I went away, telling you that my hurried departure was owing



to my daughter's being in a dying condition in Cincinnati, and asking you to take charge of affairs in my absence."

"Here is the only letter I received," said the vice-president, handing the forged epistle to Vandeußen.

"Heavens!" exclaimed Mr. Vandeußen, "I never wrote this letter; it's a forgery, and a skillful one at that. I have another of the same kind, supposed to be written by my wife, telling me to come to Cincinnati."

It was evident enough that some one was interested in getting Mr. Vandeußen out of the city—for what reason, unless to injure the gas company, did not appear.

No time was lost in giving the newspapers all the necessary information, so that the evening issues contained a full explanation of the cause of Mr. Vandeußen's absence.

The true and forged letters were published, and Mr. Vandeußen stood completely vindicated.

Gas-stock began to climb up to the old figures, and everybody wondered why the stockholders had been so foolish as to sell out.

It was not yet understood what was the object in writing the forged letters, but it was noticed that, when the gas-stock approached its old figures, parcels of it were offered for sale, but who the sellers were nobody knew.

In the course of a few months twenty thousand shares were disposed of in New York, and ten thousand in Philadelphia and Boston. The matter was soon forgotten by the general public, but long remembered by the sufferers that had sold at thirty.

As for Mr. Vandeußen, he could be seen as of old riding along Broadway in his handsome carriage, leaning on his gold-headed cane and smiling blandly on the people who bowed to him. But, although the gas-stock had gone up, somehow or other the great man had not recovered his former popularity with the multitude.

It is astonishing how soon the general public forget the idols to whom they have been accustomed to bow. It was hard to disabuse the public mind of the impression made by Vandeußen's sudden disappearance, and many people still believed that there was something wrong which the company had hushed up to secure themselves against loss. It was darkly intimated that Mr. Vandeußen would soon be superseded by Mr. Birch, but for whose management in the late crisis the whole gas concern would have gone to the dogs.

"What do you think of all this, Allan Dare?" said the chief of

police to his friend, handing him the paper with the published letters. The chief had just stopped in at Dare's quarters to visit him.

"I think," said Dare, "that it was a scheme to rob the public, and is a part of the enterprises now carried on by a band of robbers. It's all fish that comes to their net, and the small robberies are committed merely to throw the police off the track. Do you know that when the gas-stock touched the lowest point thirty thousand shares were bought up by one man—a fat fellow with a red face and a red nose? The brokers say they would know him anywhere. I doubt it, though, for, after he had secured all the stock he wanted, no doubt his appearance changed very much, and he will never be seen again. Some of the same stock has found its way into the market again. Don't you think it worth while for a company of scamps to engage in a plot like this to make money? And it is such an easy way, although it could not be repeated. I have been on the watch and have picked up a good deal."

"Well, Dare, you look deeper into things than other people do. I think you must be right about this, although it never struck me before."

"I am convinced," continued Dare, "that a master-mind is at the bottom of all the strange things that have happened lately in New York—some one that holds a good position in society. If I am to catch these rogues I must hold a similar position, and you must obtain letters that will give me the *entrées* into the best society of New York, not as Allan Dare the detective, but as a gentleman of leisure—a part that I can play to perfection."

"I can arrange it for you," said the chief. "I know Mr. Eton, of Eton & Co., well; he has a charming wife. Then there's the Vandeusens, Mortons, and a lot of others. I'll give you a chance to become acquainted with the first families."

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## CHAPTER XXI.

### FLOSSY AND HER TRIUMPHS.

THE day after the meeting of the chief with Allan Dare, Robert le Diable entered the parlor where Flossy was sitting, surrounded with laces, ribbons, gloves, and all the *etceteras* which go toward

making up a woman's wardrobe. Flossy was getting ready for the spring campaign, and Madame Bobinet had sent her numerous patterns from which to choose an outfit. As she sat in an arm-chair with her gorgeous surroundings she looked as graceful as the lily bending over some silvery stream. Through the half-opened window-blind the sun poured his beams, a single ray lighting up the golden curls on her beautiful head. Her little heart fluttered as she raised her eyes and saw the reflection in the mirror opposite.

"I wonder," said Flossy aloud to herself, "if I am as beautiful as that? Or are mirrors like men—deceitful?—for the novels say that men *are* deceitful, though, goodness knows! none of them have ever troubled me with their compliments. Old popsy has always kept such a close watch over me that nobody has a chance to tell me I am pretty. I'm sure that handsome man, whom we met yesterday on the Bloomingdale Road with that beautiful lady, would give his eye-teeth to know me, and each of his eye-teeth are worth a diamond, for I never saw so beautiful a set of teeth as he showed when he laughed. Heigh-ho! why can't I know some of these handsome people? I never meet anybody but popsy and Mr. Robert—dear good man!—who gives me all these things from fairy-land, and carries Aladdin's lamp in his pocket. But then Mr. Robert is not handsome, although his figure would be splendid in a suit of broadcloth. But how he does look in that eternal gray suit, which he must have been wearing, by the appearance of it, at least four years! And then that ugly, tawny beard of his—it's enough to disfigure any man! He might as well not have any teeth, for no one can see them in such a mass of hair.

"There," she said, putting some silk patterns together, "I wonder how this would do—a reception-toilet of cardinal satin and satin plaided in Madras-colors on gold ground, false skirt of rose-silk taffeta with plaiting of gold-colored satin, finished by plaiting of red satin at the foot, a wide-plaited flounce of the plaided satin surrounding the skirt? If that isn't style then I don't know what style is. I should think even Mr. Robert would approve of that, bless his dear red nose! I wonder if he couldn't get something to prevent it from peeling? I wonder if he has ever been in love? I don't think the man has a particle of sentiment in him.

"There now"—twisting some silks together—"the silk laid in a succession of folds finished with a wide band, covered with a plaiting of the red satin, and draped over a square curtain of the plaided satin! Well, if that doesn't make Madame Bobinet stare

I don't know what will—though, no doubt, she will want to finish it off with ten yards of Brussels lace. Let her if she wants to.

"I wonder," continued Flossy, "if Mr. Robert knows the difference between Brussels lace and any other kind. I don't believe he does; he and popsy talk of nothing but gas-stock and cotton-bales. How I hate that kind of talk! If Mr. Robert would only talk to me sometimes it would be pleasant, but he sits and stares at me as if I were something strange."

Flossy was so taken up with her thoughts that she didn't hear Mr. Robert as he pushed open the parlor-door, which stood ajar. He had been for some minutes an amused auditor, and might have remained some time longer listening to her soliloquy, but just then she happened to glance at the mirror, and lo! reflected there she saw the gentleman of her thoughts standing, hat in hand, ready to pay her obeisance.

She gave a little scream, but, recovering herself quickly, exclaimed: "Oh, you dear old fellow! I am so glad to see you. I thought you were never coming back any more."

"Yes, Miss Flossy," said he, taking her hand, "here I am once more—red nose, tawny beard, and all—and ready to entertain you with gas-stock and cotton-bales."

Flossy looked surprised, but not abashed. "La me!" said she, "did you hear all that nonsense? Why, you must have been here for the last half-hour. The truth is, I have to talk to myself, as I have no one else to talk to. You can't expect a woman to sit still all day long and not wag her tongue. Why didn't you speak sooner?"

"To tell you the truth, Miss Flossy," said Robert, "I was looking at the most beautiful picture I ever saw in my life—you sitting surrounded by your silks and satins. It carried me back to the shadowy past, whose memories have almost become obliterated. I hope it may remain stamped on my memory as long as I live."

Flossy clapped her hands with delight. "Oh!" she exclaimed, "you are as nice as the man I saw in my ride. I am sure he could not say anything prettier than that. After all, you have some sentiment in you. Now come and sit by me, Mr. Robert. Don't ask for papa, and I'll tell you all about it."

"I didn't come to see your father," replied Robert, "but I came expressly to spend the morning with you, although you do think I care only for gas-stock and cotton-bales, and wear a coat that looks four years old."

"Now hush!" said Flossy, putting her hand over his mouth; "don't repeat any more of that. Listeners never hear any good of themselves; you should have remembered that. But now keep quiet, and answer my questions."

"I am all attention," said Robert. "The morning is all your own, Miss Flossy."

"Then," said Flossy, "first and foremost, popsy and I rode out last week in the beautiful carriage with a pair of bay horses, and a coachman in a drab coat, that you sent for us. I tell you I felt as if I were the equal of the Empress Josephine."

"So you were," said Robert, "the equal of any one."

"When we got out on the Bloomingdale Road," she continued, "we found lots of carriages filled with fashionable people, who looked at us as if we were something more than common. I think it was my salmon-pink bonnet with the salmon-tinted feather, for Madame Bobinet says there's nothing out this season to compare with it. Oh, it was so amusing! And popsy kept telling me all the time not to stare at people, but how could I help it when they were all staring so at me? It was so all the afternoon, drive where we would. We were going slowly up a hill when we met an open carriage coming down, with a gentleman and lady in it. They were talking gayly, but as soon as they got nearly opposite us the lady drew her companion's attention to me and I heard her distinctly say, 'Isn't she a beautiful little kitten?' There, Mr. Robert, was a compliment for you! The gentleman looked me through with his large eyes. He was the handsomest man I ever saw, and as for the lady, she was beautiful. I think they have been lately married, for she looked so lovingly at him with her soft blue eyes."

"What kind of carriage and what livery had they?" asked Robert.

"The livery," said Flossy, "was dark olive-green with silver buttons. The carriage was straw-color, and the horses two beautiful sorrels with flowing manes and tails."

"That," said Robert, "was Mr. Eton's turnout—a rich old merchant who keeps up all that splendor that his wife may flirt with handsome young men. He doesn't seem to mind it, however, and his wife is considered the prettiest woman in New York. The gentleman you saw with her was no doubt Mr. Deville, a banker who came here from Europe about two years ago, and is making a great deal of money in speculation, but who will probably lose it all before he is done. They say that Mrs. Eton keeps her sweetest

smiles for Deville, and all the women are crazy about him, although he has no eyes for any one but Mrs. Eton."

"Oh, I must know Mr. Deville," said Flossy, "just to see if he is as handsome close to as at a distance."

"That is easier said than done, Miss Flossy, until you get into society, and then, no doubt, he would soon be at your feet."

"And I must know Mrs. Eton also," continued Flossy, "she is so nice; and then it would be so lovely to cut her out. But I must tell you all. After they passed us they turned and overtook us before we reached the top of the hill, and the lady examined me from head to foot. She took me all in, as I did her, for I can tell you everything she had on. I don't think I ever saw anything more becoming than her collar trimmed with the finest point lace in two layers, tied in a square knot of wide cobalt-blue ribbon. And then her hat was a marvel of beauty—a perfect *parterre* of roses."

"Spare me a description of the lady's costume," said Robert, "for I could not take it in. What more did they do?"

"No more," answered Flossy, "for popsy got angry, and said, 'I never saw such impudence,' and he ordered the driver to whip up his horses and 'get rid of those impertinent people.' We soon left them behind, but yesterday, when popsy and I drove out, among the first we met were this same couple, and what do you think Mrs. Eton did? I could have scratched her eyes out! She had actually got a bonnet just like mine, and a white fur tippet the same as I wear. I'll never forgive her as long as I live. And as for Mr. Deville, he showed all his white teeth as he passed us, and actually had the impudence to bow to me. Did you ever hear of such a thing?"

"All of which, Miss Flossy," said Robert, "is a compliment to your charms. In less than a week every young lady in New York will be wearing a bonnet and tippet like yours. The most fashionable milliners will be overrun with orders, and you will be known all over the city. Mrs. Eton will call on you, and you will be all the rage, which I am sure will please you—for, poor child! you have had but a dull time of it so far, and getting you into the best society is rather out of my line. I am known only as a bold speculator on 'Change, and I am acquainted with but few members of the *haut ton*. You will find something in society far more interesting than the unsentimental Mr. Robert with his red nose, tawny beard, and ancient coat. But I hope you may be induced in time to for-

give me for being deficient in the qualities that distinguish Mr. Deville and his associates."

Flossy jumped up and grasped both his hands. "You dear old friend!" she exclaimed, "I'll never find any one that will take your place in my heart. You found me a poor, friendless girl, with scarcely a place to lay my head, and you have made me equal to a princess. You found my father in poverty, and have raised him to opulence. You have done more for me than all the world besides, and, as long as I live, I shall love you as a brother. I love your old gray coat and your tawny beard, and don't object even to your nose. You are full of honorable sentiments, and that is the kind of sentimentality I most appreciate. There, now," she continued, her eyes filling with tears, "that's how I feel, and that's the only way I know how to express myself."

"And that makes me happy," said Robert; "and, Flossy, you shall always be my little kittenly sister! But now I must take a brotherly leave of you, for I have much to do." Flossy offered her little rosebud mouth for a kiss, but Robert passed that by and kissed her gently on the forehead.

"Is that all a brother claims?" said Flossy, in a rather melancholy tone. "But I never had a brother, so how could I know?"

"It is all that I claim, Flossy; but as I never had a sister, how should I know? Good-morning, kitten." With these words Robert departed.

Flossy sighed, and then sat down again to her work of arranging her reception-dress. On the table lay three new bonnets; six pairs of gloves were also displayed—one, of a salmon-pink; another, pearl; a third, ashes of roses; fourth, cobalt-blue; fifth, corn-color; and a sixth maroon—to suit different dresses. The room looked as if the fairies had each left there some beautiful article for Flossy's toilet.

Flossy was in a morning costume—a dress of light-blue cashmere, trimmed down the front with Valenciennes lace, ornamented with bows of blue ribbon, the corsage cut square, the short sleeves trimmed with lace. Her feet were incased in blue satin slippers, and in her hair was a white tea-rose. Flossy was indeed a picture worth looking at, and fortunate would have been the artist that could have painted her as she appeared that morning.

Flossy had stood up for a moment to match some of her fabrics when there came a knock at the parlor-door. She absently said, "Come in," thinking it was one of the servants. The door opened,

and a beautiful young lady, fashionably dressed, entered the room. Flossy was so absorbed in her occupation that she did not notice who it was that had entered, while Mrs. Eton—for it was she—stood transfixed, looking at the beautiful girl in her exquisite pose.

"There," said Flossy, aloud, "I don't think Mrs. Eton will get a chance to copy *that*. It's stunning, and no mistake!"

"Yes, you lovely creature," said Mrs. Eton, coming forward, "it is beautiful, but not half so beautiful as you are in your present costume. I am Mrs. Eton, and I have fallen in love with you, like everybody else who has seen you, and have called to make your acquaintance. There's my card—Mrs. Job Eton. I don't like the *Job*, but my husband is as patient as the man mentioned in Scripture, and puts up with all my whims, so that consoles me. Now, Miss Carrolton," she continued, "we must be fast friends from this hour. No one shall monopolize you but me. You shall ride with me, dine with me, sup with me, and go to the theatre with me, and I shall chaperon you to all the balls and parties. Deville shall send you every morning a beautiful bouquet. You shall not know a weary hour from one year's end to another. I'll prepare your trousseau for you when you are married, for you soon will be, all the men being wild about you. There, now, what do you say to that?"

All this time, while Mrs. Eton was rattling on, Flossy stood looking at her in amazement, not being able to insinuate a single word. But, when the voluble lady stopped and seemed waiting for an answer, Flossy drew herself up loftily and said, "Why, Mrs. Eton, it is not ten minutes since I declared that you should be my enemy as long as I lived."

"Why, you dear child," cried Mrs. Eton, "what have I done to cause your resentment?"

"Did you not go and copy my bonnet the day after you saw it, when I only had one wear out of it, and when I had told Madame Bobinet not to make another like it?"

"You dear, sweet, innocent child," replied Mrs. Eton, laughing heartily, "is it for that you would destroy my happiness for ever? Why, you beautiful girl, if you treat me unkindly for that sin you will have to punish all New York, for there is not a fashionable girl in the city that has not ordered a bonnet exactly like yours, and whatever you wear after this will be copied immediately."

Flossy's eyes beamed with delight. "If that's the case," she said, "I forgive you, for I want to be the rage in the rôle of the sweet little kitten. That's what Mr. Robert calls me."



"And who is Mr. Robert, pray?" asked Mrs. Eton.

"Don't you know Aladdin with the wonderful lamp? He knows you, and told me all about you, and how much Mr. Deville was in love with you. Ah, you naughty woman, to let a young man be in love with you when you have a husband of your own!"

"You innocent darling," said Mrs. Eton, laughing; "but my husband is such a bear! I married him for his money and gave up Arthur Seabury, one of the handsomest young fellows about town, to take him. Job knows that, and he lets me do as I please. I flirt awfully with the young men, but I expect you will cut me out everywhere."

"Not with Mr. Deville," said Flossy, saucily, "for I am told he is always at your side."

"Humph!" said Mrs. Eton, "I am not so sure about that. But he is my property just now, and, until I tire of him, no one must lure him away. But, Flossy—I must call you Flossy, it's such a beautiful name—you must swear eternal friendship with me. I'll be your fairy godmother," and she kissed the young girl on her soft cheek.

"Oh!" said Flossy, "I'm quite in love with you already, for you are just as sweet as you can be. But I must know Mr. Deville too. What kind of a man is he?"

"Deville?" said Mrs. Eton. "Why, he is a perfect love of a man. The women all adore him, and even the men are infatuated with him. He is fast, though, my little friend, and might shock your notions of propriety. He gives suppers where the men go and play cards till daylight; he bets heavily at the races, and generally wins; he patronizes dog-fights and boxing matches, and I don't know what all. In my opinion, however, he is none the worse for all that. I don't like nice young men, who part their hair in the middle and teach Sunday-school classes—do you, darling?"

"I don't know much about them," replied Flossy. "I never knew a young man in my life, my father has always kept me so close. But tell me more of Mr. Deville."

"He is a thoroughbred," said Mrs. Eton, "and that means all that's noble. There's George May, who commenced by hating him and now adores him, notwithstanding his lady-love is head over ears in love with Deville, who doesn't care a cent for her. Finding the women all setting their caps for him, and thinking Deville rather young and inexperienced in New York society, I just took him under my wing and gave him good advice. I am his monitor; he

does nothing without consulting me, but he shall devote himself to you."

"Tell me," said Flossy, "about the girl that is in love with Mr. Deville."

"Ah! Louise Morton! Well, darling, she is unlike anything you ever saw in your life. She is very beautiful, I must acknowledge. Her figure is perfect. Imagine a sculptor that had chiseled out of marble a perfect form and features, and then breathed the breath of life into his image, and you have Louise Morton. Her smile is like the soft ripple on a placid stream, and she has a voice like one of those fabled sirens that lured men to destruction. Her movements are grace itself, her beautiful face is full of expression, her lips are like rosebuds, and her ears like tiny sea-shells. Her hair is black as night, and she has such an abundance she doesn't know what to do with it. Her hands and feet are exquisite. What more would you have to make her a perfect woman? Yet with all this she is a devil, and the man who marries her will live in purgatory. When in repose her eyes are beautiful and soft, like those of a gazelle, but once thwart her in anything and they assume a cruel and cold, steel-like expression.

"The men all adore this girl of nineteen," continued Mrs. Eton, "though she is cruel to them all. George May is wearing his heart out for her, and she makes him think she cares for him, keeping him near her until she has made up her mind how she will dispose of him finally. As long as he serves to amuse her, or draw attention away from her other designs, she will keep him dangling about her. He is a dear, sweet fellow, with the face of an angel, and that woman will break his heart as sure as there is a sun in the heavens. So devoted is May to Deville that he would even give Louise Morton up to his friend, but he knows how cold Deville is toward all women. They say he left a love in Europe, and that there is a sad story about it, but I hardly believe the man's heart has ever yet been touched in that way. He seems cold as ice, and Louise Morton's fascinations have no effect. The fact is, my dear, I look after Deville and keep him on his guard."

"Dear me!" exclaimed Flossy, "how lovely it sounds—just like a novel!"

"Yes, dear," replied Mrs. Eton, "the poor fellow might be led astray if it were not for me. I make him breakfast with me every morning, and find out everything that passes at Morton's the day before. Of late he dines almost daily at Morton's, for you must

know he saved Mr. Morton from bankruptcy by advancing a large amount of money, which has not yet been repaid. I do believe Morton is trying to catch him for a son-in-law, for Deville is apparently as rich as Croesus and is the rising man in New York. He's a darling fellow, Flossy, and mind you don't lose your heart with him, for he is as cold as marble. I am the only one with whom he ever exchanges confidences, and I tell you, in strict confidence, that he is a little smitten with me. But he knows how devoted I am to my old bear, and he never presumes beyond kissing my hand or kissing me on the forehead. I don't mind him; I'm his godmother, you know."

"I don't like people to kiss me on the forehead," said Flossy. "That's not the place to kiss when one has a pair of lips. Don't you agree with me, Mrs. Eton?"

"You are right, Flossy," she replied, "but, for his own sake, I don't want Deville to know any more than he does about women. He would soon go astray if it were not for me."

"I must help you to keep him in the right path, poor young man," said Flossy. "I feel sorry for him, for, from what you say, I suppose he has neither mother nor sister."

"No," said Mrs. Eton. "I stand in the place of mother and sister to him. But, Flossy, you are rather too young for a mentor yet; you can look on, however, and learn. Mr. Eton gives a supper Tuesday evening at the Hôtel d'Or—a bet he has lost to Mr. Deville. All the *ton* will be there, and your father and yourself will receive invitations. Now, my child, I must leave you," and, kissing Flossy affectionately, Mrs. Eton floated out of the room.

"Oh, my!" exclaimed Flossy as soon as she was alone, "what a beautiful dream I have had! Isn't she an angel? and I was going to be her enemy. How kind she is to that poor Mr. Deville, who has neither mother nor sister! I wish he would take me for his sister, even if he did only kiss me on the forehead. Mrs. Eton and I could give him lots of good advice. Ah me! how beautiful the world is growing! This must be the paradise I have heard so much of."

Then gathering up her silks and satins, Flossy placed them all together upon the sofa with the remark, "Lie there, gorgeousness! I have gone through too much heavenly excitement for one day"; and away she flew to the adjoining room, where lunch was being served to her father, who had come in unobserved.

"Who was that woman, Flossy, you had in the parlor," in-

quired Carrolton. "You'll ruin me, child, with mantua-makers' bills; remember, I'm not a millionaire. That woman will charge you double for the manner in which she dresses. I got a glimpse at her through the sash-door, and she looked like a duchess, but when I saw all the rubbish on the floor I knew her for one of those confounded milliners."

Flossy screamed with delight. "Oh, you foolish old popsy, to mistake the rich Mrs. Eton for a milliner! Why, pop, she's the cynosure of fashion, and so nice that I have fallen completely in love with her. Do you know, she is going to matronize me to all the balls and parties, and she says I will be all the rage, and that all my dresses will be copied. I think when they see me in my plum-colored velvet, trimmed with black Brussels lace, with bonnet and ostrich-feathers to match, if the girls don't sigh then I'm mistaken."

"Flossy, Flossy," said her father, "did you ever hear the old adage, 'Give a beggar a horse and he'll ride to the devil'?"

"Thank you, sir, not quite that far, if you please. But I am going to-morrow to ride with Mrs. Eton and Mr. Deville, and I mean to give people something to stare at. And, popsy, they are going to have a grand supper at the Hotel d'Or—the Etons, I mean—and you and I will be invited. I am just so happy I don't know what to do with myself. We will get into good society at last. I'll marry a millionaire, and you can do just what you like. What a pity it is we can not take Mr. Robert with us; but he has such an awful red nose, and wears such unfashionable clothes! Besides, he wouldn't enjoy fashionable society at all."

"Stop, Flossy," interrupted Carrolton, "don't name Mr. Robert in the same breath with your New York fashionables. Praise your Mrs. Eton and your Mr. Deville if you like, but don't disparage the man that gives you your bread and butter."

This remark brought Flossy to a full stop, and the tears came into her eyes.

"You are right, popsy," she said. "I am an ungrateful little kitten; I don't care if I never see any of them again."

All that night Mrs. Eton and Deville were present in Flossy's dreams, but Mr. Robert never once appeared to her. When she arose in the morning she found a large paper box in the parlor, with a note from Mr. Robert that it was to be worn at Mrs. Eton's supper.

When Flossy opened the box she stood motionless with surprise.

The contents were from Madame Damascene, late milliner to the Empress Josephine. It included a dress worthy to be worn by a princess, made nearly all of the richest lace, to be worn over pink silk or satin. The sweetest little bonnet of lace over pink and lovely pink marabou feathers was in the box, with gloves and slippers to match, and a rich lace shawl. Everything was in keeping, and rich beyond what Flossy had ever conceived.

Two little leather boxes still remained unopened, and Flossy's eyes sparkled when two beautiful bracelets set with diamonds appeared in one box, and a tiny watch set in a Rhine-stone in the other.

"How did Mr. Robert know I was going to the supper?" she muttered. "I didn't know it myself when I last saw him. I do believe Mr. Robert is in love with me. No man would give a girl all those beautiful things unless he loved her. I hope not. I'd like him to be just my brother and nothing more. Oh, my! I could never stand that big red nose of his, and that sun-burned beard, and those old clothes—and I could never make him dress up. It's impossible to teach an old dog new tricks. But popsy would never speak to me again if I didn't marry him. Perhaps he'll pop the question next time he comes. If he does, what shall I do?"

Just then came a knock at the door, and Flossy, hastily thrusting her latest acquisitions into the box, called out, "Come in," and in walked Mrs. Eton and Mr. Deville.

Flossy looked at them in astonishment. She had never in all her life before seen such a handsome pair. It was like a dream to her to be in such company. Before she could recover herself Mrs. Eton had her arms around her, and was covering her cheeks with fashionable kisses.

"You darling," she said, "it seems ages since I saw you."

To which the simple Flossy answered, "Why, Mrs. Eton, it was only yesterday you were here."

"Isn't she charmingly innocent, Deville?" said Mrs. Eton. "But I forgot to introduce you—Mr. Deville, Miss Carrolton. I hope you will like each other. With you two as my *protégés*, every one in New York will envy me."

Deville surveyed Flossy with a merry twinkle in his eye, while Flossy looked rather confused at first, her face covered with blushes.

Deville thought that even the beautiful Louise Morton did not outshine Flossy in loveliness. Mrs. Eton watched him closely to

see what effect Flossy's appearance had on him, and pouted a little when she saw him watching intently her every motion.

Mrs. Eton did not stay long, although Flossy exerted herself to be agreeable. She was charmed with Deville's French accent and his quiet manner. I fear Flossy was like all the rest of the young ladies—in love with Deville at first sight.

Mrs. Eton's object in bringing Deville and Flossy together was to have an attraction at her house, to draw Deville away from Louise Morton. She had read Flossy like a book, and thought she could manage to keep her and Deville from being alone together; but she would find it is as easy to stop a mountain torrent as to prevent two people who like each other from coming together.

When the visitors arose to go, Flossy gave them each a hand—a *gaucherie* she would get over in time—which Mrs. Eton pronounced native innocence. But Deville held her little hand for a moment, and looked intently into the depths of those soft blue eyes, which drooped beneath his gaze. As Mrs. Eton went out of the door Flossy heard her say to her companion, "I hope you know now the color of her eyes!"

Flossy watched them from the window, and saw Deville hand the lady to her splendid carriage, and then, bowing respectfully, walk toward Broadway.

"That," said Flossy, flinging herself upon the sofa, "doesn't look as if he was much in love with her. I hope he isn't. I never saw so handsome a man. What a beautiful French accent he has! I'm sure pop wouldn't want me to marry Mr. Robert if he only saw Mr. Deville. Oh, I couldn't stand Mr. Robert's red nose and tawny beard after seeing Mr. Deville. I know I shan't eat a mouthful of dinner to-day. O Mr. Robert! why don't you get a coat like Mr. Deville's, and wear kid gloves? How my heart beats! I don't know what I shall do." Talking thus to herself, Flossy fell asleep on the sofa, where her father found her when he came home to dinner. She woke up, and ate as heartily as if she had never seen Mr. Deville.

Mr. Carrolton listened quietly as Flossy's tongue ran on talking about her visitors. He saw that his daughter must go into society, and consoled himself with the thought that a new world was also opening for him, in which he might better his fortunes. He was making his way slowly but surely in his present vocation, but that did not satisfy him. He longed to be able to launch into speculations that were open to men of means, whom he saw daily making

large sums of money on 'Change. He was now but the paid agent of another man, who held him to a strict account and had him completely in his power. Carrolton felt that his employer was more than liberal toward him, yet he knew that his eye was constantly upon him, and that he could only make on his own account just what he was permitted by Robert.

Carrolton a month before was grateful beyond measure for the favors heaped upon him, but he had now almost forgotten the fact that he had been raised from the most abject poverty, and was even prepared to sacrifice his employer, if it seemed his interest to do so. Carrolton had all his life been a needy adventurer, and had betrayed the interests of his employers in every situation in which he had been placed. He now thought he saw an opportunity to advance his daughter's interests and his own, and he determined she should take advantage of it, and mingle in the society which centered all the wealth and power of New York.

He paid little attention to Flossy's remarks while she was rattling on about the charming Mrs. Eton, and descanting on the fashionable appearance of Mr. Deville, when suddenly he was struck by a remark of Flossy: "Popsy, if Mr. Robert were only a gentleman I think he would be almost as fine-looking as Mr. Deville, but he could never really be as handsome; and then he hasn't any style. The fact is, popsy, Mr. Robert wants polishing up."

"Flossy," said her father, "I have been listening to your childish nonsense for the last half-hour. Here you are not a day old in society, yet you undertake to judge of the merits of the only two men you ever spoke to in your life; one of them you have seen for a few minutes, and the other perhaps a dozen times. Let me caution you about being too premature in your judgment in such matters. I have been seriously thinking whether it would be wise in me to permit you to embark in the whirlpool of fashionable society, until your judgment becomes more mature."

"Why, popsy," cried Flossy, "I am engaged to drive with Mrs. Eton and Mr. Deville at four o'clock, and I think my judgment quite enough matured for that. You don't mean to say I can't go?" Here Flossy pouted, and looked so pretty that her father's heart relented.

"No, puss," he said, "I don't intend to deprive you of a single pleasure. Your life has hitherto been one of privation, and you have borne it all without a murmur; but I expect your pleasure to be tempered with moderation. You have no mother to guide your

footsteps, and I don't know that I am justified in letting you enter society under the auspices of Mrs. Eton, who, as far as I can learn, is a perfect devotee of pleasure."

"Why, you foolish old popsy, you wouldn't want me to come out under the auspices of an old woman who would mew me up and deprive me of all pleasure. No, thank you, sir. I would rather jog along as I am. And, popsy, I do think you might trust me a little. Why, who knows ~~but what~~ <sup>but what</sup> I may be of some use to Mrs. Eton? If I think she is a little fast I will give her good advice, and, popsy, I intend to tell you everything that happens and everything that is said to me, as I have always done, for I could not keep a secret from you."

"There are secrets, Flossy," said her father, "that girls do not even intrust to their mothers. It would be better for young girls if an unrestricted confidence existed between them and their parents, which would prevent them from going to strangers to confide their secrets. If there were more home confidences fewer domestic affairs would afford scandal to the inquisitive. But I shall look after you myself—not to watch you, but merely to advise you in matters where your own judgment may fail you. I have heard of young women who considered their fathers were acting as spies over them, simply because they gave them good advice in regard to their actions, and inculcated the necessity of preserving such decorum in society that even the most carping could not find a flaw in their armor. I hope you will never think, Flossy, because I am interested in your welfare, that I am keeping a watch over you. There's another thing, Flossy. I shall think it very strange if Mr. Eton fails to leave his card on me. You can tell the Etons I am agent for purchasing cotton for a house in London."

"Is that quite respectable, popsy?" asked Flossy.

"Respectable, you little goose!" said Carrolton. "Of course, it is highly respectable. It might not be if I only bought a few bales, but to buy thousands of them is quite another matter. I must give you one caution, Flossy, in your intercourse with the world—that is, to keep a close mouth and never jump too suddenly to conclusions. You made some comparisons between Mr. Deville and Mr. Robert, our benefactor, not at all complimentary to the latter, although I am certain that Mr. Robert is as far superior to Mr. Deville, in all that goes to make a man, as a diamond in the rough is to a highly polished Rhine-stone."

"La, popsy!" said Flossy, "how can you say so when you never



saw Mr. Deville, except that glimpse of him you got in the carriage?"

"Yes, I have seen him often," replied Carrolton, "and I discovered nothing in him superior to Mr. Robert. He has a jaunty air, wears fine clothes, is worshiped by the young men for his expensive suppers, and is no doubt leading most of his friends to the devil."

"Oh, popsy!" exclaimed Flossy, "how can you say such shocking things? What do you know about him?"

"Mr. Deville is living on the way," continued her father, "while Mr. Robert spends his time in making money, and gives away thousands of dollars to the poor. Your great weakness, Flossy, is jumping too quickly to conclusions. I will tell you a fable that you must remember whenever you are thrown into the company of strangers. There was once a little mouse who was brought up in strict seclusion by its mother, who did not wish it to come in contact with the world of mice until it was old enough to distinguish the difference between true and false friends. As soon as the young mouse was old enough to run about she wanted to accompany her mother in her excursions, and paid no heed to the latter when she told her she would not be able to escape if hard chased by their enemies. 'Besides, my dear,' said the mother, 'you must not go into the world until you are old enough for me to point out to you the dreadful foes that menace our race. There are hundreds of them, and worst of all the cat, from which we can not escape if she once lays eyes on us. But be a good little mouse and rest quiet until I return from foraging.' The mother had no sooner departed than the young one began to peer out of the hole, and the world looked so beautiful that, forgetting her mother's admonition, she determined to see something for herself, and scampered off as fast as her weak little legs would let her. Some chickens gathered around to watch the mouse's antics, remarking to each other, 'I wonder if her mother knows she's out?' and a large cat stealthily approached, which the mouse perceiving, ran toward it, attracted by its beautiful fur and general benevolent aspect. The old hen, anxious for the safety of her brood and having no confidence in the cat, ruffled her feathers and clucked angrily, and a cock crowed so lustily that the mouse fled in terror to its hole, which she fortunately reached in safety, although nearly frightened out of her wits. 'Oh!' said the little mouse to her mother, 'I saw a most beautiful animal with lovely eyes, soft fur, and long whiskers, and was just going to play with

it when a terrible monster covered with red feathers ran up and uttered a dreadful roar, which so frightened me that I ran home.' 'The beautiful animal that you saw,' said Mother Mouse, 'was the cat, the deadly enemy of our race, and if it hadn't been for the coming up of the honest cock you would have been killed and eaten, without a doubt.' Now, Flossy, I hope you will remember that story and profit by it."

"Why, you foolish old popsy!" exclaimed Flossy, "I knew you meant me all the time; but you needn't be alarmed; you'll see that I can paddle my own canoe. I'll show you that I am no foolish little mouse. But now I must go and get ready for my ride. You will have Mr. Eton and some other big swells calling on you before you know it." Kissing her father fondly, she flew up-stairs to dress, singing "Comin' thro' the Rye."

At four o'clock Mrs. Eton's elegant carriage arrived, and Flossy, who was waiting, hastened to receive her visitor. As soon as Mrs. Eton saw Flossy she broke out into rhapsodies.

Flossy was dressed in a plum-colored velvet and black lace, trimmed down the front with a lighter-colored satin ribbon in bows. On her head was a gypsy-bonnet almost covered with pink feathers, with a fall of Brussels lace around the edge. Around her neck was a white tippet. She carried a white muff and salmon-pink parasol, and wore salmon-pink gloves.

"If you are not the most beautiful thing in creation I don't know what beauty is," exclaimed Mrs. Eton. "Why, you will set the whole town crazy. But come, Flossy dear, I have two beaux to-day—George May and Deville. If you don't lose your heart with May you never will. He is the sweetest thing alive."

"No doubt," said Flossy; "but there are so many of that kind in New York, I can't fall in love with them all. But I must introduce you to my father," who at that moment entered the room.

"Happy to know you, Mrs. Eton," said Carrolton, "and to thank you for your kindness to my darling child, who is quite a stranger in this country, and misses her friends in England."

"We consider it an honor to have her," replied Mrs. Eton, "she is such a joy; and what a treasure you have hid away here, Mr. Carrolton!" and she gave him the tips of her fingers. "Why, the child is a perfect poem—a vision of delight. Excuse me, Mr. Carrolton, if I monopolize her; but no one else will be allowed to take possession of her but me. Mr. Eton will call on you at once,

Mr. Carrolton ; but now we must say *au revoir*, for everybody will soon be on the drive" ; and, nodding gracefully, she tripped off, carrying Flossy with her.

"La, Flossy !" she said, when outside the door, but loud enough for Carrolton to hear, "what a splendid, aristocratic-looking man your father is !"

"No wonder he looks aristocratic," replied Flossy, "for his ancestors came over with William the something ages ago."

"That is splendid. William the Conqueror you mean ! Why, Eton dotes on the English aristocracy."

The two gentlemen stood at the carriage ready to hand the ladies into it. Mrs. Eton introduced Flossy to Mr. May, and Mr. Deville respectfully raised his hat.

"To the drive, John," said Mrs. Eton, and off dashed the spirited horses, while the footman nearly broke his neck in climbing to his station.

"This is lovely," said Mrs. Eton, "and, since we have our little club together, let us enjoy ourselves. Flossy, Mr. May is one of my chums, and you must like each other. George, did you ever see anything quite so tantalizing as this little rose ?"

"No," said Mr. May, "I don't think I ever did—if Miss Carrolton will not think it flattery in me to say so," and he seemed to devour her with his eyes, when Flossy knew that he was thoroughly in love with Louise Morton.

As for Flossy, she was quite bewildered at being in company with two such handsome men, so different in style—one a splendid herculean specimen of an olive complexion, the other of a slighter though manly build, light complexion, golden hair, and blue eyes—the face of an angel, if such an expression can be applied to a man's countenance.

Flossy gazed furtively at both her new acquaintances, while Mrs. Eton rattled away, engaging them in conversation, and giving Flossy a chance to study them at her leisure.

"Both splendid," said Flossy to herself, "but it is like the beauty of the Newfoundland dog in one case, compared with that of the more fragile greyhound in the other. If I were offered my choice I wouldn't know which to take. I wonder what Mr. Robert would say if he could see me now ; but what matters it to me ? One is in love with Mrs. Eton, the other with Miss Morton, and they don't give me a thought."

Flossy was mistaken. Both the young men were dying to have

a talk with her, for both thought her the most charming little puss they had ever laid eyes on.

At last May found an opportunity to ask her how she liked America, and Flossy, who had kept quiet longer than she liked, broke into rhapsodies.

"Like America?" she said; "why, I adore it. Everything here is so bright and lovely—so unlike smoky old England, where the sun hardly ever gets a chance to shine. I hope to live and die here, and never go back to a country where the—"

Here it suddenly struck Flossy that she was not exactly following in the course marked out for her by her father, and she blushed in the most charming manner.

"I am quite of your opinion, Miss Carrolton," said Deville, "in regard to the English climate, although the natives generally think it the best in the world."

"At all events," said May, "it produces the most beautiful complexions in the world."

Flossy was grateful to Mr. Deville for coming to her rescue, and grateful to May for his pretty speech, which she felt was intended as a compliment to herself; but she had come very near speaking of her early life before strangers, and she kept a guard upon her lips after that.

The barriers of reserve once broken down, the party kept up a continual flow of conversation. The new acquaintances were delighted with Flossy's *naïveté*, and she was delighted with their kind attention in explaining everything they saw, and pointing out to her all the distinguished people they met on the road, who seemed quite as anxious, from their looks, to know who Flossy was as she to know them.

Three times she had been seen on the drive—twice with her aristocratic-looking parent, and now riding with the rich Mrs. Eton, the banker Deville, and the handsome George May, the latter seeming quite enamored with her.

They passed the Mortons' carriage at a point where for a moment they came to a standstill. Flossy's eyes danced when she saw Louise. "Heavens!" she muttered, "what a beautiful creature, and what a superb turnout!" Louise, though she saw the party, and doubtless heard the remark, never deigned to look that way or notice Mrs. Eton's bow.

"She is the most beautiful being I ever beheld," said Flossy as they drove on, "but I wouldn't own such cruel eyes as those for

all the money in the world." Then, remembering that George May was said to be desperately in love with Louise, she blushed, and fell back in the carriage, and could not be made to talk until they nearly reached home, when she made a faint effort to be agreeable. A damper had, however, been put upon the party by Flossy's unlucky speech, and it was just as well the ride had nearly come to an end.

As they drew up at the door of Flossy's house Mrs. Eton said, "Remember, you breakfast with me to-morrow at eleven, and Mr. Deville and Mr. May will do the same."

"I shall be delighted," replied Flossy as she tripped toward the house, escorted by Mr. May, who begged permission to call for her next morning and escort her to Mrs. Eton's.

"I shall be too delighted," she said; "and it is so good of you after my making that silly speech about Miss Morton's eyes."

"You said what was true," replied May, "for she has at times the severest look out of her eyes; but when she is in good humor they are as soft as those of a gazelle. If she only had your eyes, Miss Carrolton, she would be perfect."

Flossy laughed and flew up-stairs, where she found her father, and gave him a glowing account of her ride, omitting, however, the speech she had made about Miss Morton's eyes.

Thus ended this delightful day, in which Flossy had realized more than she had ever dreamed of in all her life. A new world had opened before her, in which she saw vistas of never-ending happiness, with no thought that any storm could arise to overshadow it.

It had been a warm day, the last of April, and the long, gloomy winter seemed to have come to an end. The first flowers were springing up, and the birds were already singing their lays as if in praise of the great Creator.

Sweet thoughts spring up in April, and as flows the sap through the veins of the thriving tree, so flows the blood through the veins of youth. All nature speaks of love; the tree, late stricken to the core by the wintry blasts, prepares to put on its summer garment. The whole earth begins to teem with insects, and its barren spots to be covered with a verdant carpet.

In April love begins to bud like the trees and flowers, and, as Flossy sat at her window that night, drinking in the soft and balmy atmosphere, her youthful pulses had more than their wonted beat, and her rosy cheeks were more than usually flushed with the excitement through which she had passed that day.

She had never seen any man so handsome as Deville ; she had never dreamed of one so perfect as George May—yet, ten to one, she thought neither of them would give a moment's thought to her after she was out of their sight. One was in love with Miss Morton, the other with Mrs. Eton, so her papa had told her, yet she had heard that men were fickle and fond of change. "Why may not these two change to me?" she thought. "What a triumph that would be!" and with that consoling thought she closed her window-blinds, and in a few minutes was fast asleep, wandering hand-and-hand with George May in the land of dreams, or sailing over some placid lake in a gilded boat with the handsome Deville.

Could either of them have seen Flossy in slumber, with her golden hair hanging over her white shoulders, and her rounded arms lying in youthful grace above her head, it is likely they would have dreamed more of her, and less of the peerless Louise Morton.

Angels hovered over the couch of the beautiful girl, and sunrise came like delicious music to rouse her from her refreshing slumbers.

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## CHAPTER XXII.

### MIDGET.

SINCE we last heard from Allan Dare he had not relaxed his efforts to ferret out the vermin that were infesting New York, and carrying terror to peaceful households.

As if by preconcerted action, all robberies of any magnitude had ceased, the depredations now being confined to a lower order of villains, whom Allan left to the care of the regular police force, which had been reorganized on a plan suggested by him to the chief.

The force were now fully awake to the importance of making a reputation for themselves, and, under the immediate direction of English Charley, were nightly capturing some clumsy law-breakers.

Allan Dare had been joined by two assistants, who had worked under his direction while he was a member of the detective force in Paris. Both were excellent detectives, and both spoke English fluently. One was called Pierre Tormenteur (the ferret), the other Jacques Belette (the weasel), and both agreed admirably with their

names. They were wiry fellows, of great nerve and strength, and untiring energy, who could assume almost any disguise with little fear of detection. Their arrival in New York was only known to the chief of police and to Allan. English Charley was often astounded when the chief of police would tell him of a burglary or street robbery, give him all the details of the affair, and tell him where to find the perpetrators. The worthy Briton began to think his superior was in league with old Clootie himself, but it was Allan Dare and his two associates that discovered all the culprits. -

Dare was not, however, satisfied with catching the small fry. He knew that the larger game had only temporarily retired for the storm to blow over, and bided his time waiting for the great robbers to reappear on the scene.

He one day stopped at the eating-house of Hans Hammel, and found that worthy attending to three or four seedy-looking men that had called in to get luncheon.

"Can you give me a mug of good beer, my friend?" asked Allan.

"Goot peer?" said Hans; "vell, I dosh not shell pat peer, ant how long vos it since dot I vos your frent? How yer vos any how? Put you ish a fine-loogin' man vot might knog der house down. Put dam't a pit of goot or pat peer yer git here, pecaus, by tam, I doshen't shell it."

Allan walked out, having seen what he wanted. He had taken Hans Hammel in thoroughly. In him he felt satisfied he had the key to all the great robberies, and he kept him under the constant surveillance of Belette and Tormenteur.

One day the latter came to Allan Dare and said: "I have tracked Hans Hammel to his den in West Street, North River, where, under the name of Jacob Moses, he keeps a junk-shop that is, I am convinced, a receptacle for stolen goods. I find that he is an escaped convict; he was convicted eight years ago of burglary, his alias then being Abe Jacob. He has grown very fat since he escaped from the penitentiary."

"All right," said Dare, "continue to shadow him, and let me know if he makes any signs of leaving the city."

Dare then called on the chief of police, and asked him to obtain the loan of the gold snuff-box that had been stolen from Mr. Edmunds by Abe Jacob. The chief called on Mr. Edmunds, who readily granted his request, informing him at the same time how the box had been stolen by Jacob, and of that worthy's escape from

prison. Then for the first time the chief understood why Allan wanted the box.

When Dare had the box in his hand he said : " This is worth a dozen detectives, for it secures a most important member of the great gang."

Coles, who robbed Mrs. Ruggles, and the three men that robbed the Morton bank, were still in jail waiting trial at the next term of court. Jane Ross was still under surveillance of Gabrielle, but, as the gang was for the present quiet, Jane seldom went out of doors.

One day, when Gabrielle called at Allan Dare's house to report progress and receive instructions, he asked : " How is your brother ? Is he improving any ? "

" Yes, sir," she replied ; " thanks to your bounty and the kind physician you sent to attend him, he is quite well, though looking thinner than ever."

" Send him to me at once," said Dare, and Gabrielle departed. In less than half an hour the boy reported himself to Dare.

" Well, Midget," said Allan, " are you ready for an adventure, and do you feel well enough to bear any kind of exposure ? "

" Yes," said the boy, " any exposure that another boy can stand."

This youth was a remarkable-looking person. He was thirty-six inches high, and weighed about as many pounds. He had just recovered from an attack of typhoid fever, and had rather a cadaverous expression of countenance. His age to a casual observer would seem not more than eight years, but he was really sixteen.

Midget was not one of those atoms that add no weight or light to creation. He was intelligent, and could speak both French and English fluently. His strength and activity were wonderful. He could climb like a squirrel, was a capital actor, could throw his limbs out of joint, and disfigure himself so as to excite the pity of all who beheld him ; he could be deaf, dumb, and blind, when it suited him, and could run like a greyhound.

One can imagine how valuable Midget, with all these characteristics, would become in the hands of Allan Dare.

" Midget," said Allan, " there is a German named Hans Hammel who keeps a low eating-house in Pine Street. He is under suspicion, but it's hard to detect him in anything criminal. He keeps no servant, does his own cooking, and serves his guests himself. I want this man shadowed down to the finest point, only don't let him suspect you. The plan is for you to obtain employment with him, and never, if possible, let him get out of your sight.



When he is asleep for the night come and report to me, but never otherwise."

"I understand, sir," said the boy. "You shall know all about him soon. I will manage to become a necessity to him." And Midget bade his employer good-morning.

Midget's first move was to obtain a whisky-barrel, minus the head, which he filled with straw. He then procured a padlock and dog-chain, and, boring a hole in the barrel, passed one end of the chain through and fastened it inside with a staple. He then trundled his property on a wheelbarrow down to Five Points, where he locked the chain to a cellar-grating, close to a barrel of the same kind occupied as a residence by one of the street-gamins. This barrel was to serve for Midget's sleeping-quarters in case of necessity.

While Midget was engaged in preparing his domicile a rough-looking man emerged from a drinking-shop hard by and sang out, "Halloo, bull-pup, what yer doin' there? Off with yer, unless yer ready to pay up handsome for groun' rent."

"How much, colonel?" said Midget, respectfully. "I am ready to pay anything reasonable."

"Why, you darned little rat," said the ruffian, "you put on as many airs as a millionaire."

"Yes, colonel," replied Midget, "I have a house of my own, and that's about as much as any millionaire has; and if I don't like the climate I can move my residence to a more agreeable one—that's what a millionaire can't do without going to the expense of keeping two houses."

"Well, Mr. Tom Thumb," said the ruffian, "how much kin yer afford to pay down?"

"Well, general," said Midget, with dignity, "considering the advantages of the situation, and the chance of making agreeable acquaintances, I will pay your own price."

"Well, Goliah, can you afford fifty cents a month? If that's too much, you must move on."

"O Lord!" exclaimed Midget, "that's heavy. Why, I only paid two shillings a month at the corner of South and Burling Slip. But you have the advantage of quiet here in the morning, while there the carts commenced rumbling by four o'clock; and you know, governor, a fellow wants some sleep after sitting up all night drinking wine and eating terrapins."

"Hang your cool impudence! Pay up an' I'll pectect yer to the extent of fifty cents' worth, but look out and keep the premises

clean, or I'll lick yer as sure as my name's Bill Sucker." With this threat he walked back to his drinking-shop.

Midget, after locking the chain that held his barrel, trundled his barrow back to his home, then disguised himself thoroughly and proceeded to Hans Hammel's eating-house.

When Midget reached that place he found the worthy proprietor in the act of washing a lot of dishes that had accumulated during the morning—a task that was evidently not congenial to him.

"All tese tam tishes ter vash," he said, "unt only twenty-five shents brofit all ter mornin'. Mein Gott! its enuff ter gill an elerphunt, unt ther boss vont leff a feller av a elp—dunder unt blitzten, vot vor in ter name uv all dat's goot dit Hans Hammel effer ship in sush a pizness? Vot fur I nod got a frow ter vash ub ter tishes? Vy, pecaus ter tam vomans kan't keeb ter segreets, and has sush tamt long tongues. Vell, I musht go ter vork, fur der kompanie will shoon kom in"; and Hans began to put the dishes in the tub.

At that moment an emaciated object, begrimed with dirt and clothed in rags, appeared at the door. "I say, general," said Midget, for it was he, "can't you give a feller a job?"

Hans Hammel stared at the boy in astonishment. "How you vas now?" said he. "Mein Gott! dot feller wants a jop. Vell, I should dinks so. Vot kind ov er jop vount a larsh man likes you want? Do yer dinks yer cud move er spiter-web or lift er chaw terbaccer off der floor? Mein Gott! Mein Gott! vot a choke it ish. Dosh yer mudder know yer out, mein ging of shiants?"

"No, governor," said Midget, "I ain't got no mother nor father nor sister nor brother, and no relations. I'm an orphan, and haven't had nothing to eat for so long that my belly and backbone are rubbing together."

"Vell, mein Gott!" said Hans, "never I see a petter liar, an' er firsht-glass liar at dat. I don't perlief sush an small sprat haf any packpone, ant yer pelly ish no pigger ash a flea. Vere dosh yer lif, ant vot dosh yer do fer a liffin', an' how olt mite yer pee? Gest please ansher dot."

"I work on odd jobs for a living, general. I live in a barrel in Grub Alley, at Bill Sucker's bar-room. I'm eight years old, and if you want to know about my character before you hire me, Bill Sucker'll give me a first-rate recommendation."

"Who tolt yer I vos a goin' ter embloy yer, yer tamt liddle

blatterskites? Cum in ant vash dose tishes ant den I'll dalk mit yer."

"All right," said Midget, who commenced to wash dishes as if that had been his usual employment; and in a short time the dishes were washed and wiped dry, while the glasses looked as if they had been polished.

"Vell done!" said Hans Hammel, who sat looking at Midget while the perspiration was running over his Jewish face. "Yer a firsh-t-glass liar unt no mishtake, bud if yer dond bedde ter tyfle mit yer vashin' dishes I'll knog unter! Vot ish yer name, bup, ant how mush vill yer asksh py der month? Dunder ant blitzen, ter boss vould kill a feller ash dishopeyed orters."

"My name is Tom Thumb," replied Midget. "I only want my victuals and drink, and half a dollar at the end of the month if I suit you."

"Ter teufle!" said Hans. "Why, dat ish all I gits; but den vare vill yer shleep, Mishter Dom Thum, vor yer shan't spent der night vrollickin'?"

"I can sleep in my barrel in Grub Alley, under Bill Sucker's protection."

"No! no! dot'll neffer do; yer musht stay here, an ven I goesh oud I kin log yer in ter dake care ov dish house."

"But I can't lose my barrel, general, after living in it three years."

"Neffor mint der parrel. I'll go loog at him meinshelf. Yer stay here ant scrup up dose floors vile I go ant see him." And Hans put on his hat and walked out, locking the door behind him.

Midget at once went to work and scrubbed the floor; then he scrubbed the tables and cleaned the windows; and under his efforts the place soon acquired a neatness that it never possessed before. He also took an impression in wax of the front-door key-hole, and also of the door leading into the room at the head of the stairs, formerly mentioned as the place where the burglars entered. He even descended to the subterranean tap-room, and took impressions of all the locks of the doors there.

Meanwhile Hans Hammel, ever suspicious, determined to find out all about the mite, whose talents for washing dishes had extorted his admiration. Hans had been strictly enjoined by the leader of the gang that made his house a rendezvous, never to have any one in his employ, so that outsiders might not get a clew to what was going on. The leader was afraid that his well-planned combina-

tions might be upset by some one not bound by the rules of the secret society and not standing in awe of its penalties. A dull fellow in the employ of Hans Hammel might tell things without knowing their importance; therefore Hans had been directed to have no one in the house. He had the place rent free, and all the profits, besides other perquisites.

But Hans was getting old and lazy, and he had a particular aversion to washing dishes. He had been pondering for a long time how to remedy the evil, and the advent of Midget made him come to a conclusion. "Mein Gott!" said Hans to himself, "one liddle fly like dot poy kin do nopody harm."

Had Hans Hammel been aware of the new combinations at work for the capture of thieves in New York he would not have admitted an angel into his den had one presented himself; but he had formed a contempt for the police force, and took little trouble to conceal his past offenses, trusting to the great change that the past few years had made in his personal appearance.

He was walking as rapidly as his obesity would permit toward Five Points, and was thinking how he would thrash the life out of "dot liddle vorm" in case he had deceived him. At last he found the entrance to Grub Alley, and Bill Sucker's grog-shop, the proprietor of which was standing in the doorway. Two barrels filled with straw were chained to the iron window-frame of the area, on one of which the name of Tom Thumb was conspicuous.

"Your name ish Pill Shucker," said Hans, accosting the grog-shop keeper, "and dosh you know dot poy Dom Thum?"

"What in the hell business is it of yours what my name is, you infernal greasy Jew?" answered the amiable Mr. Sucker. "I want you to understand that ere boy is under my pertection, and if you meddle with him I'll break every bone in your ugly carcass."

"Bud, my goot shentlemans, I pegs pardons. I shust asks a shimple question, ant I'm not a damt Chew. I'm as goot as you—vot you wash, anyhow?"

"I'll tell you 'vot I wash' if you don't clear out," said Bill, and with that he knocked Hans's hat over his eyes, and then, administering a vigorous kick in his rear, he propelled the old fellow up the street.

With Hans Hammel discretion was the better part of valor, and, as soon as he could get his hat from over his eyes, he made haste to get out of reach of the irate Bill Sucker. He cast no "longing, lingering look behind" until he reached the end of the

block. There he thought he saw Bill Sucker getting ready to follow him, and, we regret to say, Hans Hammel started to run as well as his big body would let him, and was soon in a place of safety.

But Hans had found out what he wanted, or thought that he had, and, not caring to learn anything more about the boy, made the best of his way home.

When Hans opened the door Midget was apparently fast asleep on the hearth. Everything in the room had been scrubbed clean, while none of the provisions left by Hans had been disturbed by the half-starved Tom Thumb.

"Mein Gott!" said Hans, "vot a shewel of a poy! He vill safe me a fortune; he's worth his weight mit cold. Here, Dom Thum, wake up, my child, ant get some tinner. Eat as mush pread unt putter ash yer pleashe."

Midget opened his eyes and smiled when he saw Hans Hammel. "Oh," said he, "I am so glad to see you! I was a gittin' lonesome like, and was so hungry I had to go to sleep."

"Vy the teuffle didn't yer eat some er dot pread unt putter?"

"Because," said Midget, "it wasn't mine, and I had no right to touch it, even if I were starving."

"Mein goot Gott!" exclaimed Hans, "vot a fine poy! Vell, ve shall get along joost like soap mit water. Ant now, Dom Thum, joost you eat so mush as you can hole and keep yer pelly from rubbin' agin yer packpone. You shall shleep to-nide on a goot liddle ped py der fireblace until six o'clock in der mornins, unt den set der taples." And so Midget found himself installed in Hans Hammel's eating-house much sooner than he expected, and Allan Dare was encircling his game with his nets, using the simplest means, which were generally the best to bring about what he desired.

Allan Dare spent a good portion of the day and night in roaming over New York, to familiarize himself with every locality, while Belette and Tormenteur were scouring the city and its environs, taking notes. Sometimes they got on a wrong trail, and then they would break off and try something else. Sometimes they would be startled with the result of their observations. Many curious coincidences occurred, leading them to believe with Allan Dare, that their game was not confined to the ordinary criminal class, and they never saw any well-dressed persons in the streets late at night without giving them particular attention. This led them to notice a mystery they could not solve. On several occasions they had shadowed men at night to Pier 28, North River, where

they took a boat and proceeded toward Jersey City. One night they saw as many as ten men in the course of an hour leave Pier 28, and, although they watched all night, they never saw the men return.

On one occasion Belette and Tormenteur took a small boat and pulled from the Battery along the piers in the North River. About 8 P. M. a four-oared boat passed them, and when at some distance ahead they pulled up, in hopes of seeing the boat land at Pier 28. But they were disappointed, as the boat passed on, and, laying on their oars, the detectives fancied they heard the sound of the oars pulling out into the stream, so that they feared they had frightened their quarry.

Every event was carefully noted and reported to Allan Dare, and Midget, who was allowed to go out once a day for an hour to play, went to his employer to report everything that occurred in Hans Hammel's house. Allan had skeleton keys made from the impressions of the locks furnished by Midget, so that the latter could roam over Hans Hammel's premises whenever his master went out. But Midget was cautious and patient, and he determined to find out all Hans Hammel's ways before he took any further steps.

A day or two after Hans employed him, Midget went down to Five Points and brought his barrel up to the saloon. He begged Hans to let him sleep in it, as he had slept there so long that he couldn't feel at home in a bed, and Hans consented. "Goot liddle poy," said he, "he shall av all ter intulgence he vants, ant shall shleep mit his parrel ven he liksh !"

Hans rather liked the idea, for, in case any of the emissaries of the boss should come in at night, they wouldn't notice the barrel in the corner, while Midget felicitated himself in being able to watch Hans from his barrel without the other noticing him.

Midget would begin to yawn and look sleepy about eight o'clock, and Hans would say, "Go to shleeps, goot liddle poy ; shleeps maksh yer grow, ant yer got ter make up for loss times." And then at eleven o'clock Hans would put on his coat and hat and go quietly out, locking the door after him. Midget would watch him from the window to see if he lingered. Hans, however, seemed to have no suspicion of Midget, who had completely deceived him. He usually returned about two o'clock. Twice Midget followed him, and ascertained that he went to a low dram-shop in South Street, and, after drinking until he was tired, staggered home again. Allan considered this merely a ruse to throw people off the scent,

and Belette and Tormenteur kept him under surveillance in his newly found resort.

Thus Allan Dare was daily progressing in his plans and making his approaches nearer to his game. He had picked up a good deal of intelligence in his wanderings, which he kept entirely to himself.

The burglars and street-robbers had been comparatively quiet since the great robbery of Mr. Morton's bank, and the gigantic swindle that had caused such excitement among the stockholders of the gas company. No clew had yet been found to the perpetrators. Small parcels of the stock had been disposed of in the principal cities, but the amounts were too small to attract much attention. The brokers did not much trouble themselves in the matter, for they thought it no concern of theirs that foolish people should part with their stocks for a mere trifle. The man that had purchased the largest quantity of stock was unknown, and had never been seen since his grand operation. Allan naturally suspected he was a disguised man, and paid particular attention to all the large-sized men he encountered.

The chief of police was all this time in a happy frame of mind. He had regained the confidence of the public, and saw his police system gradually perfecting under the auspices of Allan Dare. The New York newspapers now spoke of New York as the best policed city in the world, although it was hardly a fortnight since the robbery of Mr. Morton's bank. The sleepy old constables and watchmen were still retained, for it was impossible to get rid of them, and the real improvement consisted in the fact that Allan Dare, Belette, and Tormenteur were constantly perambulating the city, gaining information and throwing a few crumbs to English Charley, out of which that worthy made considerable capital.

The three detectives had to acknowledge to themselves that the party for whom they were laying nets were the most adroit thieves they had ever come across, for they left no tracks behind them.

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## CHAPTER XXIII.

LOUISE MORTON.

MR. MORTON, the banker, seemed to have recovered from the heavy losses by the robbery of his bank, and was pursuing the even tenor of his way. It was not generally known that Deville had so generously and munificently come to his assistance. Deville was not a man to mention such a thing, and Mr. Morton would naturally not say much on the subject. But, as over a month had passed, Deville thought he would call and see if Mr. Morton could, without being embarrassed, let him have a portion of the amount advanced.

Much to Deville's surprise, he found that Mr. Morton had not been very generously treated by his old depositors, many of whom had not returned to him. Among them he mentioned Mr. Eton, who not only withdrew his own money, but advised all his acquaintances to withdraw from "that purse-proud aristocrat Morton, whose bank had no solid foundation, and who hadn't sense enough to select a chief clerk worthy of confidence."

"For my part," Mr. Eton would say, "I have a strong-box that the burglars can't get into, with a watchman, armed with a shotgun, on guard day and night." He'd like to see the burglars try it on. He hadn't any double back-action contrivance with an extinguisher on top and a steam-engine big enough for a North River steamboat—not he. As to Morton and Deville, the house of Eton & Co. could buy them both out twice over. Every merchant should be his own banker. All of which amused the public very much.

Mr. Morton expressed much regret to Mr. Deville at not being able to do without his deposit for a few days longer, and Deville, glad to oblige him, agreed to let the money stay until such time as Mr. Morton could do without it. It placed Mr. Morton under deeper obligations to him, and made him certain of obtaining the father's support in carrying on his suit with the daughter—although Deville felt that it would be dangerous to let Louise suppose that any man depended on her father to urge his suit. Louise, as it has been observed, was a woman that would carry out her own ideas, despite the wishes of her father or any other person.

The evening after his interview with Mr. Morton, Deville repaired to that gentleman's mansion, and was warmly received by



him and Mrs. Morton, the latter, as well as Louise, having been informed of Deville's noble conduct.

Louise, however, received her admirer with considerable *hauteur*. It was wormwood to her to have her father rest under an obligation to any one, and it was an additional mortification to her to know that James Deville was the man to whom her father was so deeply indebted.

"O papa," she had said the day before, "to think that a great banker like you should be indebted for help to a small banker like Mr. Deville! I would have sooner died than accepted his aid—a man of whom nothing is known, as I have heard you say."

"Yes, Louise," replied her father, "you would have died sooner than have accepted aid—until you happened to want it. If I had been overwhelmed by my creditors and you had happened to want a new frock, you would have been very much put out if it had not been forthcoming."

"Yes, papa, I should. We require certain things that we may make a proper appearance in society. In finding me in dresses you do no more than Adam did for Eve when he plucked fig-leaves for her to wear. My necessities are similar to those of Eve, only it is not the custom in New York to dress in fig-leaves."

"How absurdly you talk, Louise!" said Mrs. Morton; "you seem to be in a bad humor this morning, and disposed to be disrespectful to your father."

"Yes, mamma," answered Louise, "I know I am always ridiculous. I am told so often enough to remember it. Nevertheless, I am sorry papa is under obligations to a *parvenu* of whom, as he says, no one knows anything. This freak of generosity on Mr. Deville's part will make him more stuck up than ever. I'll seize the first opportunity to take him down."

"Louise," said her father, "it seems to me that you try to devise all kinds of reasons for acting crooked and contrary."

"Yes, papa."

"And seem desirous of working yourself into a temper because Mr. Deville has helped me, as one banker should another."

"Yes, papa."

"And you persistently quote words I made use of before I knew anything of Mr. Deville—before I had any idea he was the largest banker in New York."

"Do you mean in size, papa?"

"And before I knew his worth," continued Mr. Morton; "but such conduct as his marks the true nobility of man."

"Do you think he is a prince in disguise, papa?"

"He is the equal of any one in New York in wealth, education, and refinement, and I desire that he shall be received in this house as my most intimate and closest friend."

"Shall I have him shown into your sanctum, papa, when he comes—for I know you only receive your most intimate friends there?"

"No, my daughter," he replied, sternly, "I expect Mr. Deville to be warmly received by all my family. My house must be open to him at all times."

"Not my boudoir, papa?"

Mr. Morton was so vexed that he could hardly restrain himself, so he arose and went into his sanctum.

"Louise," said her mother, "you have vexed your father very unwarrantably. It is very disrespectful in you to go on so. You might make our house such a pleasant one, if you would only curb that cynical temper of yours and try to be agreeable."

"Yes, mamma," said Louise, and coolly walked off to the piano, where her rich contralto voice soon filled the room with its delicious harmony; and the fond mother forgot, in admiring her child's accomplishments, the vexations to which she and Mr. Morton were so often subjected.

When Mr. Deville entered the room that evening Louise had not forgotten the scene of the evening before, and was prepared to receive him with her coldest expression. After paying his respects to the parents, he went over to where Louise was sitting, apparently engaged on a piece of embroidery, and wished her a pleasant evening; but she scarcely deigned to notice him, except by saying, "My pleasant evenings depend upon whether any one comes in whom I like particularly." With this she resumed her embroidery.

"I have no doubt," said Deville, "some one will come in whom you like better than you do me, but until then I hope you will permit me to try ~~and~~ enable you to pass off a half-hour."

"By the way," said Louise, carelessly, "who was that milk-maid-looking girl I saw you riding with in Mrs. Eton's carriage the other evening? That ridiculous woman is always patronizing some strange-looking creature, and thrusting her into society."

"That was Miss Carrolton, a young English lady," said De-

ville. "Her father is in the cotton business, and Mrs. Eton has taken a great fancy to her. She is very pretty and refined."

"Do you call that girl pretty, Mr. Deville?" said Louise, with one of her steely looks. "I have a Paris doll up-stairs that is far prettier. How long is it since you took to admiring milkmaids?"

"I didn't say that I particularly admired the young lady," replied Deville. "I never saw her but twice in my life. My ideas of beauty are of a different kind," he said, looking fixedly at Louise.

"Yes," she replied, "of the Hottentot kind, or that of the wild Indians of the West."

"You pay yourself but a poor compliment, Miss Morton," said Deville, "if you have failed to perceive what my idea of beauty is. I am sure I have expressed it often enough."

"Really, Mr. Deville, I take so little interest in your affairs that I have never noticed what your tastes were. It is a matter of perfect indifference to me."

Her tone was so severe and her manner so indifferent, that Deville's first impulse was to walk away and seek the more congenial companionship of Mrs. Morton, but he prided himself on his self-possession, and he never let any one see him become disconcerted. So he smiled and said, "Why, really, Miss Morton, I do not think it would be a matter of indifference to most young ladies, to know that a gentleman admired them more than anybody else in the world."

Her steel eyes relaxed somewhat their coldness as she answered: "That depends on whom the man is. Those sweet nothings are the small change which you men distribute to silly girls in society, who are no doubt glad to get it; but for my part, Mr. Deville, such flimsy compliments weigh very little. I like a man who is full of contradiction and perverseness, and one who would even be a little rude to me at times. My looking-glass tells me I am what is called beautiful, and I know myself what my mental qualifications are. I think if men were sterner and harder our sex would appreciate them more."

"I can not be what my nature forbids, even to please Miss Morton," said Deville. "Nature has made a fitting compromise in man. To the powerful she gives an amiable temperament, otherwise they would dominate over the weak."

"A bullet would soon settle the balance of power," retorted Louise, "and I am told that large men are apt to be cowards. Now

there is George May ; he is not a large man, but I believe he would dare anything on earth."

"Yes, dear fellow, he would," said Deville, "while I, Miss Morton—"

"You ?" said Louise, indifferently ; "why, I never thought of *you*, although it is said you are not wanting in courage, and the men are all fond of you, which is, I suppose, the reason why you are not a favorite with women." This she said sarcastically.

"You are a great admirer of Mr. May," she continued. "What can you see to admire in one who is so entirely different from yourself, and who has the effeminacy of a woman ? He ought to have been a girl, and he would have been just such another milkmaid-looking thing as that Miss Carrolton."

The conversation had been carried on in so peculiar a manner, with ill-temper on one side and forbearance on the other, that it struck Deville as rather ridiculous, and he could not help laughing, while Miss Morton went on unconcernedly with her embroidery.

Checking himself, he said : "Excuse me, but I could not help it. We seem to be playing at cross purposes this evening. You spoke of my admiration for George May. Yes, I love him better than anybody else in the world, except one, and that one is not to be mentioned."

"That one, I suppose, is the young lady you left behind in Europe ; or perhaps she is a married woman, for you seem to have a weakness that way."

"Perhaps," he said ; "but my love for George May can never change, for I know he will always be the same devoted fellow to me, but bad treatment from a woman might change my love."

"You had better advertise that fact, and then the dear creatures would always be lavishing their smiles, so that you wouldn't take fright and run away."

"Ah !" said Deville, "it is well that man through the rough and tumble of life learns resignation and patience. It is with these two weapons that he conquers more than by an indomitable will. Two things in the world are much alike—the human heart and a millstone. They are driven round and round, and, if they can not find anything to grind, they must be ground themselves. Why is it that women love to grind the hearts of those who love them ?"

"I suppose," said Louise, looking up, "you consider women the millstones."

"Sometimes, Miss Morton, they are very grinding ones, and

crush all the soul out of a man. Yet, what a heavenly existence is that where woman steals like a balm into the wounded heart! The hardest heart could not withstand the magic smiles that ripple round her lips. Yet, how hard and relentless are the hearts of some women toward those who have worshiped them with a love befitting angels! Can not a smile of God enter the sunless hearts of those who were sent on earth to minister to man's sorrows?"

Louise raised her eyes to his at this appeal, softened and subdued. All the temper seemed to have left the wayward girl, and the eyes of the loving gazelle never looked softer than did those of Louise Morton at that moment. There is no knowing what kind answer she would have given Deville, if George May had not entered at that moment, and with his smiling face spread new cheerfulness around.

It was the first time in his life that Deville did not rejoice in the coming of his friend, and a light cloud settled on his face; but when George, after greeting Miss Morton, put his arm around Deville's neck, with "Well, old fellow, how are you?" his good humor returned, and he answered, "Why, George, you bad boy, I haven't seen you since breakfast, and I expected you at the bank."

"Why, I have been having the jolliest time in the world," answered May. "I spent all the morning after breakfast with Mrs. Eton and Miss Carrolton. I lunched there, and this afternoon rode out on the Bloomingdale Road with them, and, by Jove! if the people didn't stare at that girl I'm a sinner. I don't wonder at it, she was dressed so natty."

"I suppose you, too, are in love with her milkmaid cheeks and silly blue eyes," broke in Louise, quietly. "I am not surprised at people staring, for the girl is certainly a fright. I expect she is a milliner and makes her own dresses, for no one knows who these Carroltons are. The bonnet she wore the other day was perfectly ridiculous."

"Now, Miss Morton," said May, "how can you talk so? The young lady is as pretty as a peach, and," in an undertone, "there is only one woman whom I think beautiful, Louise, and that is yourself."

"George May, don't talk such nonsense. You are a mere boy, and ought to be ashamed of yourself. Come here and hold my yarn in your hands while I ball it off. You are not fit for anything else in the world."

As Louise said this, in her naturally coquettish way, she really

looked the most beautiful of women. She knew her power, and understood the art of pleasing when it suited her to exert herself. Like the captain of a ship-of-war, she was almost always strung up to be tyrannical, yet as even a martinet will relax when he retires to his cabin, and be hail fellow with his officers over the enlivening bottle, so Louise could occasionally relax the waywardness of her character, and make life a heaven to all around.

Deville and May were her subjects, over whom she exercised despotic sway without fear of consequences. She knew that both these men loved her, but she felt that they loved each other with an affection seldom felt by men for their own kind. May's regard for Deville was a kind of hero-worship. He would even have been willing to see him marry Louise Morton, if she would not marry him. Every time she directed cruel remarks to Deville, it cut into May's heart as if she had struck him with a knife.

"How can you," he would say to her, "treat so cruelly a man who loves you so, and would sacrifice his life for you?" To which she would reply, "Why don't you make love on your own account, George May, and not for another man? But you are only a boy, and don't know what love means." "I would sacrifice everything for Deville, he is such a noble fellow," was always May's reply.

Louise looked upon George May as a mere boy, although he was some years her senior; and, although she desired his homage, had no intention of marrying him.

A marriage of their daughter to George May, who was the only son of a rich widow, would have been very agreeable to Mr. and Mrs. Morton, but they felt that his soft, yielding nature was hardly suited to the impetuous and domineering character of Louise. They knew little of Deville, except that he was rich and handsome, with self-possession enough for any woman in the world. Louise, in her bitterest and most sarcastic moods, had never caused him to exhibit the least excitement, or to swerve from his fixed purpose to win her at all hazards; and those who knew him felt satisfied he would rule her, and yet do it affectionately.

"I am not suited to her, Deville," George May had said to him. "She would break my heart in a month. You marry her, and let me go abroad to travel. I shall recover from the shock in a year or two."

"No," Deville replied, "as long as there is any hope for you I will not bind myself to her. It would be better for us to both

agree never to marry her, for she would never make either of us happy. I'll never marry her, George, unless you fully consent."

On this evening Louise had attained one of her pleasantest moods. The clouds which marred her countenance had vanished, and in their place reigned the golden sunshine that made all hearts glad. Her laugh was like the rippling brook, and she seemed all the more attractive from the devious ways she sometimes practiced. As she parted for the night from those who loved her, she left an image on their hearts so fair that they wished it could never be obliterated. No wonder men loved her and fell under her fascination. Who does not love an April day, with its clouds and bursts of sunshine?

"Come," she said to George May, "hold up your hands and let me wind my warp. They are better fitted for the distaff than for the sword."

"And yet," said Deville, "I should be sorry to receive a sword-thrust from those small hands. You do May injustice, Miss Morton, for his muscles are like steel."

"As for you, Mr. Deville," said Louise, "your hands are too big for my skein. You would be more useful, and command my admiration more, if you were somewhat smaller."

"I wouldn't have him deprived of a particle of that magnificent muscle for all the usefulness in the world," said May. "He can handle a dozen men, and his heart is as strong and big as his body. Deville, I envy you your size and strength."

"Well you may, you dear little boy," said Louise, "and if you don't attend closer to your yarn-winding I'll send you to bed without any supper," and her merry laugh echoed through the room.

"Who can help loving her?" said May to Deville, in a whisper.

"Who, indeed?" returned the latter.

Then she would seat herself at the piano, and warble some choice piece of music like a bird, while Deville or May turned over the leaves for her. Then she would strike out in a wild improvisation of her own, and fairly startle her listeners with her wonderful talents. This was Louise in her happiest mood—would that it could always last! The sea in its rest is lovely to look upon, but it will not always continue so.

The evening ended happily for all concerned. The parents were happy to see their daughter appearing to such advantage, and so differently from what they apprehended. The two young men

were charmed as they never had been before, and left for their homes in a happy frame of mind.

"By heavens, Deville!" exclaimed May, "she is the loveliest creature on earth."

Deville walked on in silence. Whatever his thoughts were, he kept them to himself. As they neared Deville's lodgings he said, "George, I can offer you a bed to-night, but you will find me poor company, for I can't talk."

"Nor I either," replied May, "so I think I had better go home." So they bade each other good-night, and sought their respective domiciles.

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## CHAPTER XXIV.

### THE MORTONS AT HAWKS' ROOST.

MERRY May had come and almost gone. Hill-sides and plains were covered with full-leaved trees, their branches tenanted by the choral songsters of the groves. The youth of both sexes were seeking the sylvan solitudes, culling wild flowers, or resting on the gray, moss-covered rocks, over which the rich-leaved trees threw a grateful shade.

What joy to leave the city's hateful noise and polluted air, and all life's annoyances, to breathe the free atmosphere of the woods, where gentle streams meander through the hollows to the sea! The sun at noonday scarcely penetrates these forest-glades; the air comes down the valleys laden with coolness from the mountain-tops, and earth offers no fairer scene.

What pleasure to watch the rising of the sun in summer, as he soars to the blue vault of heaven, brightening the woods and fields, and infusing life into flowers and leaves! Look at those clouds bathed in golden light, which a moment ago were dressed in mourning-weeds. See those valleys, lately darkened by the shades of night, now teeming with life, while busy labor goes forth to resume its daily toil. The silver river flows on, lit up by the sun's bright rays, while snow-white sails dot its smooth surface.

One day of such a life as this is worth weeks of existence in the crowded city, where the murky atmosphere scarce permits the sun to show his face for half the year, and in the summer scorches the weary denizens like the breath of the sirocco. Go, then, to the



woods and hills, ye who would enjoy the beauties that Nature exhibits to those who love her ! In the presence of Nature you can read a lesson never to be learned in the most gorgeous city.

The heat began to tell upon the inhabitants of New York, and many longed to fly to the lake, or the rock-bound coast, where lashing waves follow the freshening gale, or to shady glens and rippling streams, where the kingfisher's dip is heard in the dark pool. Some love the mountain and some the valley, but, fortunately for us, all tastes can be gratified.

At the time of which we write, Coney Island and the thousand other pleasure-resorts now frequented were undreamed of. Those who wanted to visit the sea-coast had generally to take with them the paraphernalia of a regular camp. Some found shelter in the houses of fishermen and farmers along the shore, but Cape May was about the only place between the east end of Long Island and Cape Henry that afforded accommodation for summer sojourners. There they could disport in the sea, and find ample accommodations on the beach, where two hotels with high-sounding names reared their heads.

Many of the wealthiest citizens of New York had summer retreats along the Hudson, not then, as now, polluted by the sewerage of so many towns and cities.

Mr. Morton owned a beautiful country-seat about a mile and a half north of the village of Catskill, where long ago Rip Van Winkle, on his return from his wanderings in the mountains, roamed the streets with all the village children at his heels, and where the sounds of nine-pin balls, played by old Hendrick Hudson and his ghostly followers, can still at intervals be heard reverberating through the mountains.

Mr. Job Eton had a very pretty cottage two miles above the village. It was unpretentious, because, as Mr. Eton explained, he was opposed to snobbery of every kind, and, while the house of Eton & Co. could buy out all the Mortons in New York, he would not throw away his money in an expensive barber-shop, such as Mr. Morton had erected.

There were numbers of other pretty cottages along the banks of the river, some jutting over the bold cliffs, some a few rods back, and some with pretty gardens in front and with a neat paling along the edge of the cliffs, to guard, perhaps, against the children falling from the rocks.

About half a mile from the Morton villa stood two taverns, the

"Dove" and the "Lamb," shaded by large trees, and backed by fruit- and vegetable-gardens. These inns offered comfortable accommodations to those who sought in summer the quiet of the country. In this little village, and its surroundings, were to be found all the necessary comforts for a prolonged sojourn during the heats of summer.

All the cottagers were preparing early in June to leave New York for their summer retreats. The steamer *Rip Van Winkle*, which stopped at all the landings, was daily loading up with furniture and stores for the up-river country-seats.

On the fifth of June the Mortons took possession of their country house, and they were soon followed by the Etons. Within a stone's throw of the latter Flossy and her father occupied a small cottage.

Deville and May went off into the wilderness salmon-fishing, but promised themselves the pleasure of seeing their friends, the Mortons, early in September. A party of young gentlemen well known to society promised to spend the latter part of the warm season in the vicinity of Catskill.

The villa, which Mr. Morton had built about three years before, was a very pretty mansion, somewhat in the French style. A wide hall ran through the house, with two parlors and a library on one side, a ball-room on the other, and a dining- and billiard-room in the rear. Great taste had been displayed in the furniture and fittings, which were light and graceful, as befitting a summer residence.

The mansion was surrounded by a wide veranda, fitted with striped Chinese curtains to keep off the sun's rays. There were fifteen sleeping-rooms for the family and guests, containing every appliance for comfort and luxury. The kitchen and servants' quarters were in the basement. At the northwest corner of the house stood a square tower, with a bell to call the loitering family or their visitors to meals. There were ample stalls for twelve horses, five carriages of different kinds, and a large corps of servants.

In front of the house was a well-kept lawn with parterres of flowers, and adjoining it stood a beautiful grove of giant forest-trees. In front of the house there were two magnificent elms, which shaded the mansion from the evening sun. South of the house was a fine fruit- and vegetable-garden, with a hot-house filled with rare plants, under the care of an experienced gardener.

Mr. Morton had expended seventy thousand dollars on his country-seat, which Mr. Eton stigmatized as a barber-shop. Fortu-

nately, Mr. Eton stood alone in his opinion, for the world pronounced the establishment perfect.

At the foot of the cliffs, at the river's edge, reached by a winding path, was a substantial dock, to which were moored three beautiful boats in which the family and guests could take exercise on the river. These boats were under the charge of an experienced waterman, who dwelt in a little cottage near the dock.

One might search the world over to find a more charming situation than "Hawks' Roost," for such was the name of the cliff where the Morton villa overlooked the Hudson. What could there be more delightful than to spend the heated months in such a place, where it was never oppressively hot in the day-time, and always cool at night? How much better such an existence than to be packed away in some great hotel, where there is little comfort and no quiet! How much more desirable the humblest cottage that one can call his own, than the most gorgeous hotel that ever reared its pretentious head!

The sea-side, as it is now enjoyed at Newport, Long Branch, and other places where the rich can have their own homes, is a life not to be despised; but how much more desirable is a roomy home in the highlands, away from the crowds that infest the sea-shore, with country air, country sports, and a comely set of young people, whose laugh echoes through the summer woods, and whose hearts, unknown to themselves, are filled with the spirit of poetry!

It is only in the highlands that the heart of youth opens itself to youth and drinks in the poetry of life—for there is poetry in every step one takes. The mountain-air kisses the tender cheek, giving a bloom and freshness known only in the mountains—so different from the rude embrace of old ocean, as he clasps you in his arms after the storms have swept over him!

There is no sentiment or poetry in the surroundings of a seaside caravansary unless, perchance, in some favored spot where sylvan woods hold companionship with the shore, and silver streams mingle their melodies with the roar of the breakers.

The old-fashioned days—when summer homes were filled with welcome guests, where around the festive board were gathered choice spirits that made the welkin ring with laughter—are poorly represented by the sea-side gatherings of later days.

There were several features which added to the beauty of the grounds at Hawks' Roost. In the southern garden were a number of grottoes formed in the rocks, with luxuriant mosses, and springs

of pure water bubbling up from the stony floor. At night these were lighted up with colored lamps, and formed a retreat where lovers might wander, or one more prosaic might smoke his cigar, and listen to the whip-poor-will's melancholy song.

Everything at Hawks' Roost spoke of happiness; if there was an elysium on earth, this seemed to be the place to find it.

But was happiness indeed to be found in this lovely place, amid these venerable trees and smooth-mown lawns, or did the sweet music of the birds in sylvan bowers swell upon the air a mere mockery of joy? Was there a skeleton buried beneath the velvet sod, that might rise at any moment and harass the hearts of those who dwelt here? We will wait and see.

Mr. and Mrs. Morton's family consisted of themselves and two daughters—Louise, already introduced to the reader, and Angeline, a girl of fourteen, generally known by the sobriquet of "Patch."

The latter was a perfect hoiden. Her clothes were half the time in strips from climbing trees and fences. Her mother had found it so difficult to restrain her spirits and keep her in clothes, that her dresses bore the marks of many patches.

Angeline was a beautiful child of her age, though awkward and uninformed, but many thought that when she arrived at her sister's age she would equal her in form and feature, and far surpass her in loveliness of character—for Angeline was full of generous impulses, and all her impulses showed a nobility of character not often found in one so young.

Mr. and Mrs. Morton had a son, a lieutenant in the navy, attached to the brig Curlew, of twelve guns, and at this time away from home.

Harry Morton was the idol of his mother and the pride of his father. He was now twenty-seven years of age, and was making a cruise in the West Indies in pursuit of the pirates, which were then preying on our commerce. He was expected home in September, when, as he informed his father by letter, the captain and several officers of the Curlew had promised to spend a month with him at Hawks' Roost.

Hawks' Roost was all alive with joy at this news, for Harry Morton was a universal favorite. As to Patch, there was no end to her rejoicings. She climbed a dozen extra trees on that day by way of giving vent to her feelings.

But when Mr. Morton informed Louise that Harry would be home in September, she merely said, "Yes, papa." And when her

father said, "Is that all you have to say on an occasion that will give me so much pleasure?" she answered, "Yes, papa, all!" Louise was in one of her moods, and her father, knowing how useless it would be to reproach her for her want of affection, strode off to his library to indulge in gloomy reverie.

There were two other members of the family proper—Miss Bane, the housekeeper, and Miss Schwartz, a teacher of music and the German language.

There was also Mr. Morton's private secretary, Edgar Lane, who spent a great deal of his time at Hawks' Roost. This young man would come up from the city on Monday morning and sometimes stay three or four days, employed in writing, and then return to the city, with such instructions as his employer had to give him. As he enjoyed Mr. Morton's entire confidence, he was intrusted with many matters that he would not have confided to any one else.

Edgar Lane was a good-looking young man, with delicate features and a pale complexion, and with large black eyes that seemed to illuminate his whole face. There was a slight hectic tinge in his cheek that might be the seeds of disease, but he was never ill, and could perform almost any amount of work required of him.

Edgar was a general favorite in the Morton family, and even Miss Morton deigned to treat him with consideration. He was so obliging and so competent that he could attend to any number of feminine commissions, from a box of hair-pins to the most expensive laces, and had even selected fall-bonnets to be sent up by the milliner. He had become a necessity to all the family. Even Miss Bane, the housekeeper, seemed to consider she had a claim on him, and called him "the dearest fellow in the world."

He was devoted to Patch, to whom he was always bringing some little memento from the city, while he looked up to Louise as to some divinity superior and apart from ordinary womankind; and, for a wonder, he was the only one upon whom, when out of sorts, she did not expend her spleen.

As to Patch, she treated Edgar always as an elder brother. She would go with him to the steamboat when he went to the city, swinging on his arm or walking by his side, telling him of the numberless things he was to do for her, while Louise would often accompany them, walking quietly by Edgar's side, and wave her handkerchief as the boat swung off into the stream.



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She looked at him with eyes of steel. "You ask me if any one stands in *your* way. I tell you, yes, there is; and in my way too!" Page 331.

## CHAPTER XXV.

## EDGAR LANE AND THE MORTONS.

EDGAR LANE had been in Mr. Morton's service since he was eighteen years old, and the family had thus learned to treat him as a near relative.

When Edgar was eighteen Louise was a beautiful child of thirteen, and he distinguished her by his notice as much as he did Patch at the present time ; but there was now a more respectful air manifested toward Louise, while she no longer in company treated him with the familiarity that she did when a child.

It was evident enough, when Edgar's dark eyes rested on Louise Morton's face and form, that it was with a feeling warmer than mere friendship ; and often, in the presence of others, she would gaze into his eyes with that loving expression she could assume at will, and which filled him with inexpressible happiness. Did they love each other ? Who can say ? Or was this intercourse the result of childhood's early friendship, which often lasts through years without ripening into love ?

With all of Mr. Morton's fondness for his secretary, Edgar Lane knew that any attachment he might have for Louise would never meet with his employer's sanction. Mr. Morton was what might be called a stern man, especially in matters of the heart where the standing of the parties was different in point of wealth and social position. Edgar had full knowledge of his employer's sentiments on this subject, and, although Mr. Morton could not conveniently do without his secretary, or prevent his intimacy with his daughters, yet he had given the young man fair warning, couched in general terms, from which Edgar knew there could be no appeal. Mr. Morton expected for his daughters the best alliances in the land as regarded family and wealth, and Edgar could bring neither of these to aid his cause, if he had dared to raise his eyes to the peerless Louise. His mother was a widow, whom Mr. Morton had rescued from extreme poverty twelve years before. He had taken a fancy to her handsome boy, had placed him at school for some years, and then taken him into his banking-house.

Mr. Morton had given Edgar to understand what the consequences would be to his daughter if she should make a misalli-

ance, and, having duly ventilated his sentiments on this subject in his own family, gave himself no further trouble about the matter. He had no great fear that Louise would wish to marry any man beneath her in social position ; he thought there was little danger of her heart breaking, and often wished she had more softness and affection.

Mr. Morton placed entire confidence in his secretary, and so far had no reason to regret his trust.

As for Mrs. Morton, she had never given herself the slightest concern about the matter. She saw in Edgar only a good friend, who would act the part of a brother toward her daughters, and would never forget the obligations he was under to Mr. Morton, or the consequences he would incur if he should ever dare to raise his eyes to either of her daughters, except in the way of friendship.

Edgar could see in such a course only a complete sacrifice of all his hopes of preferment, an end to his relations with the Mortons, disgrace to himself, and privation to his mother, who would feel more keenly than any one else his ingratitude to his employer.

Mr. Morton had rather lost faith in Louise since his interview with Mme. Boulanger, the head of the "finishing school," where pupils were taught how to enter a ball-room, and to deceive their parents. Although he had not pursued the matter, he determined to keep his eye on Louise, and see if she had any foolish love affairs on hand ; but, seeing no further grounds for suspicion, he began to think that perhaps his daughter had told the truth in saying that she was merely acting as a go-between with Miss Spanker and her lover. That was bad enough in all conscience, not that Mr. Morton cared at all for Miss Spanker, or the whole Spanker family. He was simply ashamed that his daughter should be mixed up with such vulgar people, and he ordered Louise never to recognize that young woman, no matter where she might meet her.

As for love, Mr. Morton gave his family to understand that he did not propose to tolerate the sentiment, except on such terms as he should dictate. "Let us have common sense in all things," said he. "No misalliance was ever a success. A man that owes his position to a woman always feels humiliated, and the world puts her before him. No matter how such a woman may love a man inferior to her in social position, she despises his relatives."

Having thus expounded the Morton law, this "purse-proud aristocrat" would settle down to read his paper, and reckon up his profits on the last quarter's operations.

The reader may naturally inquire, "Who was Mr. Morton that he should assume so much?" And he may remember that once, when that gentleman was impressing upon his daughter the importance of connecting herself with the best families, Louise asked him, in her most aggravating way, "Are *we* descended from an old family?" As it was rather a difficult question to answer, Mr. Morton evaded it, a circumstance that was not lost on his daughter, who had treasured it up in case of contingencies.

The first that was known of Mr. Morton, he appeared in Albany some twenty-five years before the date of our story, and established himself as a broker in real estate, soon extending his operations as far as the city of New York. A shrewd man of business, correct in all his dealings, he secured the confidence of all who knew him, and his business consequently extended so rapidly that in a few years he removed to New York. When he left Albany he was reckoned to be worth a hundred thousand dollars, a large fortune for those days.

On his arrival in New York, Mr. Morton took a good house in Bowling Green, and advertised himself as a banker and real-estate broker. He soon had a large number of depositors and clients. He bought largely on his own account, and soon owned some of the best lots in the city, several large stores on Broadway, and others in various parts of the city. He also speculated in cotton, adding largely to his wealth in this way.

In a few years he gave up the agency for real estate, and purchased altogether on his own account. He set up a handsome carriage, and purchased the elegant mansion in which he was now living. Then cards flowed in upon him, and an elegant party given to his callers exhibited his wealth. Every one felt sorry they had not known the Mortons sooner.

Mr. Morton was soon at the top of the ladder. His handsome wife won all hearts by her engaging manners, and her beautiful children were the admiration of everybody who saw them. What more could a man desire?

But yet Mr. Morton was not happy. He was reserved to all acquaintances, and had not a single intimate friend. He did all he could to bring the best society to his house, but he offered no attraction in himself. He was a fine-looking, gentlemanly man, but the guests that dined with him never stayed late; they seemed to feel that he would rather be alone. Mr. Morton and his wife did not commune much together when alone, although he

loved her as much as it was in his nature to love any one, and gratified all her wishes. She felt that within the last few years he had withdrawn himself a good deal from her in his confidences, but, as he gave her every proof of affection, she attributed it to advancing years and the engrossing cares of his business.

No one ever asked who Mr. Morton was, or where he came from. It was enough to know that he was a gentleman, a man of honor, and the leading banker. The public were astonished at the manner in which he had stood the run on his bank after the robbery, not suspecting that but for the timely aid of Deville he would have been seriously embarrassed. The secret was known only to Deville and Mr. Morton.

Autumn has come and the glory of the year is about to pass away. Nature has clothed herself, as it were, in half-mourning for the golden days of spring and summer that have vanished like fleeting dreams.

It is sad to see the spring and summer pass away. It is like a man giving up his youth ; and, as winter comes on apace, it is like the advance of old age creeping in to terminate our short span of existence. But autumn, with its mellow light, comes in between to take away the shock we all would feel if winter should spring direct from the arms of summer. Nature has so tempered the seasons that we can derive happiness from all the changes that occur, and when summer passes away, with her gorgeous plenitude of leaves and flowers, she leaves a pleasing soberness in the tints of autumn that amply repays us for the loss of buds and flowers.

What a glory there is in the autumn woods, and how lovely is the stream with their rich hues reflected in its waters ! How pleasant is the sound of crackling leaves as we tread them under foot in our woodland rambles ! And pleasant also are the gambols of the squirrel as he gathers his winter stores from the trees, and the tapping of the woodpecker as he bores his way through the bark, in search of morsels to suit his fastidious taste.

In summer we love to roam the woods with a pleasant companion, when the forest-glades are teeming with life, when mossy seats of deepest green tempt one to rest and watch the sun's rays peeping through the leaves, lighting up the recesses of the shady retreats. In autumn we love to roam the forest alone, our thoughts as somber as the surrounding gloom. We admire the stalwart oak with gnarled trunk and widespread limbs, and think how many

winters have howled around its head. The tender vine now clings to its noble trunk and finds a safe asylum, till winter comes with frosty breath and fills his branches with dangling icicles. 'Tis sad to see the approach of winter, to know that we are leaving rich autumn behind, with its bracing air that stirs the life-blood in man and nature.

At Hawks' Roost the summer had passed pleasantly but quietly, and the autumn shone with unusual splendor. The Etons and the Carroltons have been the only constant visitors to the Morton mansion. Mrs. Eton had asked Mrs. Morton's permission to bring Flossy to see her, and that lady had complied with the request, although Louise declared to her mother she should never be able to treat "that Carrolton girl" with civility, she had such a common look. She was sure that her papa wouldn't like people whom no one knew anything about. Louise was not aware that Mr. Carrolton had already found his way to her father's heart by depositing in his own name twenty thousand dollars in the bank of Morton & Co., which money Mr. Robert had furnished for a purpose.

As Carrolton frequently consulted the banker on business matters and took his advice, Mr. Morton treated him with consideration, although it was not until after he went to the country that Mr. Morton deigned to invite him to his house. One day, when riding out, Mr. Morton called and left his card on Carrolton, in the latter's absence.

"What a snob!" exclaimed Mr. Job Eton. "As if Carrolton wasn't worth ten of old Morton! Why, Carrolton's family came over with William the thingumbob, and nobody knows whether Morton had a grandfather or not. He puts on more airs, if possible, out here in the country than he does in town. I suppose he thinks he is the only man that could build a shingle palace. Why, Eton & Co. could build a better villa than his twice over, and never feel it—couldn't they, Fanny?" addressing his wife.

"Of course they could, darling," replied his wife. "Eton & Co. could do anything. But we mustn't quarrel with the Mortons; our pleasure here depends on them. I am going to take Flossy over and introduce her, and, when they know her, all the Mortons will fall in love with her, as everybody else has done."

So one morning Mrs. Eton took Flossy to Hawks' Roost. The young girl stared at the splendid rooms, the gorgeous furniture, and the thousand and one things that wealthy people love to surround themselves with.

"Oh, my!" said she, "I'm frightened to death. I am afraid to meet face to face that girl with the dreadful eyes. I'm sure she will fly at me and eat me up!"

"You foolish thing!" laughed Mrs. Eton; "as if any one would fly at *you*! I shouldn't wonder, though, at her wanting to eat you up, for you look so lovely in that dress of yours! You must do your prettiest this morning. I want you to win Mrs. Morton's good opinion. I don't mind Louise, she is so variable. One does not know where to find her, but, for all we know, she may prove to be very pleasant if not variable."

"I shan't go down to that odious Mrs. Eton and that girl she has adopted," exclaimed Louise when the cards were sent up. "I hate the sight of them."

"Why, darling," said her mother, "you never saw Miss Carrolton except at a distance, and you know nothing about her. Now do be agreeable to these people for my sake, and you shall have a water-party on the river."

"I'll try," said Louise. She knew that a water-party meant with Edgar Lane in charge, for he was an expert boatman, and Mrs. Morton never trusted her daughters on the river without him.

When they came down to the parlor Mrs. Eton was all smiles, and Flossy quite flustered in fear of the girl with the dreadful eyes. Mrs. Morton advanced with quiet dignity to receive her visitors, somewhat troubled in mind as to how Louise would behave. But Mrs. Eton rushed forward and seized her outstretched hand. "Oh, this is so lovely of you, you dear, sweet Mrs. Morton!" she exclaimed, "to take the trouble to come down to us this warm morning; but this sweet child was so anxious to know you, I could not refrain from calling."

"It is not at all warm," replied Mrs. Morton, in her practical way. "I am delighted to see you, and to make the acquaintance of this young lady, of whom I have heard so much." With this she kissed Flossy affectionately. Louise courtesied to Miss Flossy in Madame Faucet's most approved style, and held out her hand, which Flossy seized with avidity, though she was trembling all over. But where were the dreadful eyes that Flossy had seen in the carriage? They were replaced by two gazelle-like orbs that beamed kindly upon her.

"Come to the light," said Louise, "and let me look at you. You look enough like George May to be his sister, only you are handsomer as a woman than he is as a man. I know I shall love

you as much as I can any one, and if George will only fall in love with you I shall be perfectly happy. You would make such a match! I am an odd creature, Miss Carrolton, and have awful likes and dislikes. I was very near disliking you. I had heard so much of you and your pretty costumes that I determined not to like you, yet here I find myself falling in love with you at once."

"Oh, I am so happy!" exclaimed Flossy. "You are so beautiful that every one must love you."

"You think so," said Louise; "but I am a little devil at times, and very capricious with those I don't love. But we shall have delightful times during the rest of the season, for we don't return to the city until the seventh of November. I must try and like Mrs. Eton for your sake; but she puts on such airs, and cuts up so with James Deville, and old Eton is such a fool, and altogether—you understand how it is."

"Yes," said Flossy; "but Mrs. Eton is very good to me, and I'm sure you'll like her when you know her better."

"Perhaps so," said Louise. "But let me show you the garden."

The morning passed very pleasantly, and, when the visitors went away, Louise promised to return the call at once.

The visiting went on all summer, and time passed so rapidly they did not know where it had gone to. They had picnics and water-parties on the Hudson, which Edgar Lane took charge of, and who was always at Louise's side, never troubling himself about Flossy any more than he could help, although that young lady declared he was ever so nice.

Flossy remarked to Mrs. Eton one evening on their way home from one of these excursions, "Edgar Lane is handsome, but don't you think him a little obtuse? He takes no notice whatever of my blandishments."

"Ah, you innocent darling!" said her friend, "he's not as stupid as you think. Edgar wouldn't dare look at you, or any other girl, when Louise was by. He has been in love with her ever since she was thirteen years old, and they say she is as much in love with him as her aristocratic notions will permit her to be. But Edgar had better never let old Morton suspect him, for he would trample him under foot as if he were a worm. Morton is a hard, stern man, and will have his own way; so will his daughter, and, if she makes up her mind, she will marry Edgar despite every obstacle. Now, Flossy, you must soar higher than that; catch George May, or Beaufort Semmes, or Ray Henry, who will all be up here in an-



other week. Don't fly with a crow when you can soar with an eagle."

In this way Flossy's eyes began gradually to be opened.

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## CHAPTER XXVI.

### NEW DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

THE day following the conversation reported in the last chapter, while Mrs. Eton and her *protégés* were riding out, they passed a handsome, well-dressed gentleman taking his afternoon walk. He turned as the carriage passed and raised his hat. "My, what a handsome man!" exclaimed Flossy; "what a complexion and what a pair of eyes!"

"Do you know," said Mrs. Eton, "that when I first caught sight of him I was sure he was James Deville? He is of the same height, and has the same broad shoulders, but then Deville has not such a long, swinging walk as this gentleman. Who can he be?"

"I don't know," said Flossy, "but he's splendid. My heart has palpitated ever since I saw him. He looks like one of the English nobility."

"Pshaw! Flossy, you are always talking of your English nobility. We've had several of them here, and, generally speaking, they are sorry-looking fellows. But we must find out who this person is, and if he is staying in the neighborhood, in which case Mr. Eton shall call on him."

During the rest of the ride they could talk of nothing but the handsome stranger. When they reached home, what was their surprise to see him sitting on the porch chatting with Mr. Eton, who whispered to his wife as he handed her out of the carriage, "Mr. Vere Saye, my darling; brought letters of introduction to me only; didn't call on Morton. A great swell—nephew of the Bishop of Hertford—graduate of Oxford—has a living waiting for him when he returns to England—and all that."

The distinguished stranger stood with hat in hand waiting to be introduced to the ladies, after which he apologized for the very great liberty he had taken in raising his hat to them. "But," said he, "you know it's an English custom, and it's hard to lay aside one's habits. If the ladies will permit me to say so, the defer-

ence I paid them was involuntary, for one doesn't meet such attractions every day on a country road."

The accent of Mr. Vere Saye was altogether English ; no one could mistake him for anything else.

The ladies thought his remarks charming, especially his allusion to their attractions. The stranger stayed to tea, and, in fact, until quite late in the evening, though propriety suggested to him that he should leave shortly after ; but Flossy's company proved an irresistible attraction. He kept up an animated conversation with that young lady, quoted Byron, Moore, and other poets, till Flossy quite lost her heart.

"I declare," she said to Mrs. Eton after Mr. Vere Saye had taken his departure, "he is as handsome as Mr. Deville, if not more so, and he certainly has the advantage of him in complexion. I shall not be able to sleep to-night for thinking of all the beautiful poetry he quoted."

"Yes, you will sleep," said Mrs. Eton, "and dream of Mr. Vere Saye too, I expect, you foolish little girl ! That heart of yours is ready to run away with every handsome man that comes along. Not long ago you were undecided whether you were in love with May or Deville, and I do believe, if you hadn't supposed both of them to be in love with some one else, you would have proposed to them."

"Now, Mrs. Eton," said Flossy, "you know as well as I do that, after being surfeited with roses, a bunch of water-lilies is delightful. Almost any change is pleasant, and such a handsome man as Mr. Vere Saye is a great change ; besides, George May calls me his little sister, and we are too much alike to fall in love with each other ; and then he's dead in love with Miss Morton—so that kind of talk is all nonsense. Mr. Deville is either in love with some one in Europe, or so much enamored with himself, that he can't think of any one else—perhaps, though, it's you he is in love with, you sly little woman !"

"*Perhaps*," replied Mrs. Eton, significantly. "He wouldn't be the first man, Flossy. But only to think of his putting up at the 'Dove' tavern ! It's a sweet little place, and Mrs. Briggs, the landlady, is a famous cook. I wonder if Mr. Saye is going to remain here long ?"

"I wonder if he is engaged ?" said Flossy.

And so the evening passed in conjectures about Mr. Vere Saye.

"I shall introduce him to Morton to-morrow," said Mr. Eton.

"I wonder if Morton will see that the man is an aristocrat, and that his ancestors came over with old Billy the what-you-call-him."

The next day the dwellers at Hawks' Roost were delighted by the receipt of a letter from Harry Morton, who informed his parents that he had reached Norfolk and would sail in a few days for New York, where he would lose no time in visiting home. He wrote that his brother officers of the Curlew, who had promised to visit Hawks' Roost, would probably come up a day or two after he did.

This threw the Morton family into a great state of excitement, in which Mrs. Eton and Flossy joined. There were Mr. Vere Saye, Mr. Deville, Mr. May, the officers of the Curlew, and several young gentlemen from New York, all to be on hand at once.

"It will remind Mr. Saye," said Flossy, "of visits to English estates in the autumn, when the young gentlemen assemble to flirt and shoot pheasants. We shall have everything here but the pheasants."

"Why," said Mr. Eton, "the woods about here are full of 'em—none of your barn-door pheasants that a man could shoot with a pocket-pistol, but great big birds that whiz through the air like a cannon-ball, and it takes a sportsman to bring them down."

"In that case," said Flossy, "it will be English all over, and there will be a chance of getting rid of the men now and then, so that we shan't tire of them."

Next day Mr. Eton called in his carriage at the "Dove" and took Mr. Vere Saye to call upon Mr. Morton, who, much to his surprise, was very affable to the stranger. The banker had already received letters from Mr. Vandeußen informing him of Mr. Vere Saye's intended visit to the Catskill Mountains, where he wished to visit the scene of Rip Van Winkle's adventures as told by Washington Irving, and see something of American life. As Mr. Vandeußen was great authority with Mr. Morton, Mr. Vere Saye found that he had fallen into pleasant places, with a prospect of seeing the best side of American society.

On a bright morning, five days after the Curlew had dropped anchor in New York, a boat from the brig might have been seen pulling up to the wharf on the North River, where the steamer Rip Van Winkle lay ready for her departure on her up-river trip. The man-of-war's boat hauled up to the gangway, and a young officer jumped on board the steamer, followed by two splendid-looking St.

Bernard dogs, which attracted the admiration of all the passengers. The dogs wandered about the boat, making acquaintances with everybody, and finally lay down at the feet of a young lady who was apparently traveling alone.

The last bell rang, the passengers were all on board, the gang-plank was hauled in, the lines cast off, the big wheels began to turn, and the Rip Van Winkle was soon speeding rapidly up the river.

The young officer from the Curlew was Harry Morton, now about to visit his parents, whom he had not seen for nearly three years. Although the Rip Van Winkle was considered the fastest steamer on the Hudson, she seemed to Lieutenant Morton exceedingly slow, so anxious was he to see his parents. Hawks' Roost had been purchased before he left home, but Harry had never seen it, nor was he familiar with the picturesque scenery of the Hudson. How beautiful everything looked to him! The trees, touched with the hues of autumn, as if heaven had rained on them a shower of the richest dyes, added fresh charms to the lovely scene.

How beautiful, he thought, must be his own home, nestling among rocky crags and giant trees, as he had often pictured it in his mind!

Lieutenant Morton was much struck with the appearance of the lonely young lady passenger to whom we have referred, and to whom his attention was drawn by the watchful care that his two dogs seemed to exercise over her. She was a beautiful girl of some twenty years of age, neatly dressed in a dark traveling suit.

The steamer had stopped at several points along the river to land passengers, and at length reaching Saugerties, the young lady arose, and, taking her light hand-valise, proceeded toward the gangway to go on shore. The two dogs rose and followed her to the gangway, as if she had been under their charge and it was their duty to see her safe over. She was half-way across the narrow plank when suddenly it tipped, and she fell into the river.

Scarcely had she touched the water when the two dogs were at her side, and, catching hold of her large sleeves, swam with her to the shore, some two hundred feet from the end of the wharf.

The young lady, though prostrated by the sudden shock, was not in the least hurt. Her chief danger was from the people that crowded to the shore as the dogs landed, but an athletic young officer pushed through the throng, picked up the prostrate form of the lovely girl, and bore her in his arms to the boat. He then called for a doctor. There is no assembly in which you can not

find a fool, a bully, a pickpocket, and a doctor. On this occasion the doctor proved to be a good one, who knew what to do. Meanwhile the steamboat continued on its course up the river, heedless of the fact that it was carrying a young lady to quite a different point than the one she started for.

"Doctor," said Harry Morton, as he laid his burden on a cot, "as this is my flotsam and jetsam, recovered by my noble dogs, I take a deep interest in the case. My dogs shall wear gold medals the rest of their lives for saving the life of this lovely creature. Did you ever see anything so beautiful as she looks in this semi-unconscious state?"

"No," said the doctor, "I can't say that I ever did; but you can imagine how much more beautiful she will look when the blood begins to course through the veins and the roses come back to her cheeks. And then, when she opens her eyes, I imagine we are going to be repaid for our trouble. Such features can only be accompanied by the most beautiful eyes. I have noticed in my practice that the most homely countenance is often redeemed from absolute ugliness by being lighted up with a pair of fine eyes, but I do not recall an instance of a woman having beautiful features that her eyes were not correspondingly beautiful."

At this moment the young lady sighed and uttered the word "Mother!" at the same moment opening her eyes and looking around with astonishment at finding herself surrounded by strangers.

"She'll be all right in half an hour," said the doctor, "and in two hours will be as well as if she hadn't fallen overboard. Here's her valise with the name, 'Mary Gale, New York.' Now," said the doctor, "we will leave her in care of the ladies, who will change her clothes and make her comfortable. Come, lieutenant, you are not wanted here any longer. You may be a good hand at putting a ship in stays, but when it comes to doing that service for a lady I fear you would be rather awkward." The doctor laughed heartily at the excellence of his own humor, but Harry, who was in no mood for laughing, failed to appreciate the joke.

Two hours later the young lady was sitting up quite recovered, though still pale and languid. She sent for the doctor—whose name was Preston—and the owner of the two noble dogs, that she might thank them. The doctor would not admit that he had done anything worthy of thanks; "and as for this young officer," said he, turning to Harry, "why, he has been made happy enough in

carrying you up from the beach to the steamboat to last him a long time. I have no doubt he would have been in the water after you had not his dogs been too quick for him. These navy fellows are gallant dogs, and navy dogs are gallant fellows, as you have seen to-day"; and the facetious doctor laughed again. "By the by, sir," said Dr. Preston, "some friends of mine in Catskill are expecting their son, Lieutenant Harry Morton, of the navy, to pay them a visit. Do you happen to know him?"

"Yes," said Harry; "no one knows him better than I do."

"Indeed!" said the doctor; "and how soon may his parents expect him?"

"He is on board the Rip Van Winkle at this moment, on his way to Hawks' Roost," replied Harry.

"Bless my soul!" ejaculated the doctor, suddenly taking in the situation, "here I have been in company with the son of my good friends the Mortons, and didn't know it. I shan't get over it soon. Only to think, young lady, I'm quite in love with this young gentleman's sister, the most lovely creature in the world, and enough like you to be your twin sister. Don't you notice the likeness, Mr. Morton?"

"I have been away three years at sea," said Harry, "and it has been four years since I saw Louise; but I should be very happy to think that she resembled this young lady." Miss Gale blushed and changed the conversation.

It seems the young lady had an engagement at Saugerties, which now being unable to fulfill, she determined to return to the city by the down boat. The doctor cautioned her to be careful how she walked the plank next time, as there might not be any navy dogs on hand to rescue her.

So at the next landing the doctor and Harry helped her on shore, and, as the latter pressed her hand, he said, "I hope to have the pleasure of meeting you again, and trust you will permit me to call and see you in New York."

"I shall always feel indebted to you," she replied, "for your kindness, gentlemen, and shall ever remember it"—and the flitting blushes came and went as she spoke—"but it is not likely we shall meet again. Our ways of life, from what I can learn, lie wide apart. I am poor, and have an aged mother to support. I shall ever pray for you for your kindness to a friendless girl."

At that moment the steam-whistle shrieked, and Harry jumped on board the steamer to save his passage.

As the steamboat disappeared up the river, Mary Gale gazed after it with sorrowful looks, and then took her seat under a tree near the landing to await the down boat.

Harry kept his eyes fixed on the lovely stranger until the landing was no longer in sight. "By heavens!" said he, turning sorrowfully away, "that is the loveliest being I ever beheld. I'll find her again if she lives in a garret. If Louise is as lovely as she, she must indeed be a paragon."

Harry and Dr. Preston talked for an hour about the young lady, and it was not until Catskill was reached that they let the subject drop.

Catskill Landing was reached at half past five; and Harry started, valise in hand, to walk to Hawks' Roost, followed by his dogs, running and leaping like young puppies instead of the two sober-minded animals they lately appeared on board the steamboat.

The evening was cool and Harry fresh, so that he walked briskly along until, arriving at a turn in the road, a rabbit crossed his path, when the dogs immediately started after it with clumsy leaps, probably to the amusement of the rabbit, which slipped into the bushes and easily eluded its pursuers.

Harry walked on, thinking of home and his expected meeting with his family. He wondered if he would find them changed—if hard work and three additional years had bowed his father's form, or if his mother's hair would be streaked with silver. He wondered what his pet sister Patch had grown to look like; he wanted to see Louise, and judge for himself whether she was as beautiful as the young lady whom he had met on board the Rip Van Winkle. He was thinking of all these things while the dogs were in pursuit of their frolicsome rabbit, when suddenly he found himself face to face with four vicious-looking men. One of them carried a small boy on his shoulder, and the others shabby-looking bundles in their hands.

"I say, mister," said the foremost ruffian, "have you a ticker, and will you tell us the time o' day?"

"I can tell you the time of day fast enough without a ticker," said Harry; "it wants but a few minutes of six o'clock."

"But," said the fellow as the four ruffians closed around him, "you must have looked at your ticker to know the time, and I'd like to see what kind of a warming-pan such a flash-looking covey as you carries about him."

"Grab him, Bill," said one of the ruffians, "and see what his

ditty-bag holds"; and the fellow made a dive for the valise. But Harry, who had his right hand in his pocket, suddenly brought forth a short lignum-vitæ club, and brought it down so forcibly on the rascal's head that he laid him quivering on the ground; and at the same instant he blew his whistle, which echoed through the woods.

The first ruffian drew a long knife and rushed at Harry with an oath, but Harry, quick as lightning, struck him a blow on the wrist that made him drop his weapon. But he seized Harry by the throat with his left hand before he could repeat the blow, and the other two rascals were about to rush in and secure their prey, singing out, "Over the cliff with him when we've got the dunnage!"

Just at this critical moment the two dogs, who had heard their master's whistle, arrived on the scene and attacked the villains in the rear, who, before they could realize what was the matter, were upon the ground, with the fangs of the dogs in their flesh.

Harry was master of the field, and magnanimously called off his dogs, an order they reluctantly obeyed. The three robbers made good use of their time and were soon out of sight, leaving the little boy and their bundles behind.

The man who had been knocked down by Harry now began to revive, and, raising himself on his elbow, muttered, "I say, Bill Slicer, the cap'n 'll give you hell; you know its agin orders; three months in the sweat-box aboard the schooner, if you don't have to walk the plank." Then he fell back on the grass. Pretty soon he raised himself again and said, incoherently, "Bill, if anything happens to that boy you'll get ten dozen with the cats; the schooner's only four miles off, you know. Take that off my head; you're crushing me."

Harry Morton did not know what to do. He had won a victory under remarkable circumstances. The men were evidently sailors belonging to some vessel on the river, and, after all, might have only intended to frighten him. Doubtless they had deserved punishment for their insolence. The man on the ground had fallen into a lethargy, and, as night was coming on, Harry determined to push forward and send back assistance to his prostrate foe. He tied the small but heavy bundles together and slung them across the back of one of the dogs, and, putting the little boy on the other, resumed his march toward Hawks' Roost.

The boy had exhibited no fear or excitement; on the contrary,



he seemed to be highly amused with all that had occurred ; and his ride on the dog's back seemed especially to please him. He was a handsome boy, with beautiful black eyes and chestnut curls. His age could not have been more than seven years. Harry asked the boy several questions, but he apparently did not understand them, for he merely shook his head and laughed.

It was now nearly sunset when Harry came in sight of a pretty cottage embowered in a wealth of vines and shrubbery. This was Mrs. Eton's eyrie, which she called the "Dove-cote." Mrs. Eton, Flossy, and the accomplished Mr. Vere Saye were sitting together on the veranda as Harry and his caravan came along the road.

Mrs. Eton clapped her hands and exclaimed, "Why, that must be Harry Morton and his two dogs, Jupiter and Ammon, that he has been writing about. But what boy is that, I wonder ? and what a funny little monkey he is !"

"Unless I am mistaken," said Mr. Vere Saye, "that young officer has gained a battle and is taking his prize into port. Both those dogs are spotted with blood, and the boy is the very same one that was carried on the shoulders of the ill-looking straggler that passed here an hour ago. It would be a jolly joke if the youngster had defeated the whole party, you know."

"Oh, the dear, sweet fellow ! How manly and handsome he looks, to be sure !" said Flossy. "I wonder if he is engaged."

"There you go, you silly little thing !" said Mrs. Eton, "losing your heart before you know anything about the youth—but he'll be a great catch, Flossy, so get him if you can."

"Pshaw !" said Flossy, "can't I sympathize with the young man after he has gone through such a terrible struggle ?"

Meanwhile Harry was in sight of his father's house, which he knew from description. Entering the house, he took his way to the library, where he suspected his father would be found. Sure enough, there sat Mr. Morton reading by the window, and when he saw Harry he jumped up with the first smile on his face that had appeared there for many a day. "My dear boy," he exclaimed, "I am so glad to see you !" and he warmly embraced his son.

The boy and the dogs lay down on the rug, quite unnoticed by Mr. Morton, who rang the bell and told the servant he would like to see Mrs. Morton in the library.

"We'll give her a surprise, Harry," said he. Harry soon had his mother in his arms, and, giving her a good hug, covered her face with kisses.

"My dear boy," she said, "what a splendid man you have grown to be! But what is all this menagerie you have brought with you, and whose child is this?"

"That," said Harry, "is my prize of war, captured after a bloody battle. Sit down and I'll tell you all about it."

At this moment Patch ran in, quite out of breath. She was up an apple-tree when informed by the gardener that her brother had arrived, and in her haste to get down had torn her dress down the back. She left her hat up the tree, and lost a shoe on her race to the house; but, never minding these trifles, she burst into the library, overturned a chair, and, giving a spring of about ten feet toward her brother, landed with both arms around his neck.

When Harry at last managed to get his breath he exclaimed, "Well, you are the same old Patch as ever; but give me a chance to breathe, dear."

"No, I shan't," said Patch; "I shall kiss you for the next hour, you dear old handsomest fellow in the United States!"

Just then she caught sight of the dogs and the small boy, who lay with his arm around the neck of his canine friend, looking on with a pleased expression.

Patch was at the boy's side in a moment, and, standing him on his feet, exclaimed, "What a cunning little monkey! What's his name, Harry, and where did you get him?"

"I captured him in war," replied Harry, "and his name is *Bene Trovato*."

"Poor little thing!" said Patch; "perhaps his mother is crying her eyes out now about him. Come, Benny, let's go into the kitchen and get our little hands and face washed. Have you any mother, Benny?" The boy said nothing, but brushed away a tear from his eye with his dirty little hand.

"Why don't you speak, you little monkey?" said Patch; "haven't you any tongue?"

The little fellow shook his head. "Mercy on us!" exclaimed Patch, "the child is dumb." The boy laid down by his canine companion, and Harry commenced to tell his adventure on the road.

At that moment there came a loud knock at the library-door, and Mr. Morton rose to see who was there. "Bless the people," said Patch, "I wish they would stay away; some stupid old bore, I'll warrant, that nobody cares to see."

"Why, Angelina!" said her mother, reprovingly.

"Yes, mamsy," said Patch, "I know; but it's so provoking when Harry has such interesting things to tell us."

At that instant Mr. Morton returned, ushering in Mr. Vere Saye, who was immediately introduced to Harry and informed that he was just about to recount some interesting particulars of an event that had occurred on his way up from the landing.

"Yes," said Mr. Vere Saye, "I happen to know something about it, you know. I saw the lieutenant go by with his dogs, and recognized the boy as one whom I saw on the shoulder of a stroller, and, seeing blood on the dogs, I took in the situation at once. Mr. Eton and I rode down to see what had happened, and found a place where the ground was all torn up, and there were clots of blood here and there. We followed a bloody trail down hill directly toward the water. The villains no doubt had a boat lying near by, as there was the mark of a boat's keel in the mud, and they left an old bloody jacket that we held as evidence."

"Thank God!" then said Harry, "I didn't kill the fellow."

"Oh, do come, Harry, tell us all about it," exclaimed Patch, unable to conceal her impatience. "Mr. Saye, please sit down, and let Harry tell his own story."

The latter, thus pressed, gave a complete account of his late adventure, which was eagerly listened to by all. The little boy, moved by curiosity, approached Harry's chair, looking up into his face with his large dark eyes, now and then nodding his head and smiling approvingly as Harry told the story in detail.

"There lies the key to a mystery," said Mr. Vere Saye. "If the child could talk, young as he is, he could be the means of bringing to light some deep iniquity. I only wish I was a detective, just to have the pleasure of hunting down those fellows, using the boy as a clew to catch them. The boy has been deprived of the power of speech, and is used by a gang of robbers for the purpose of putting him through a window-pane after the glass is removed, so that he can open the outer doors and let in the thieves. In England we would soon ferret out the fellows, but your detective system in this country is of small value. From what I am told, I imagine the fellows are in very little danger of being arrested."

Just as Mr. Vere Saye uttered these words Mr. and Mrs. Eton, accompanied by Flossy, walked into the room.

"I can't agree with you there," said Mr. Eton; "we have the finest detective system in New York of any place in the world."

You Britishers always think you have everything better than anybody else. Don't you have house-breaking in London?"

"Certainly we do," replied the Englishman, "but London is larger than a dozen New Yorks, and, of course, we have a great number of thieves."

"All owing," said Eton, "to your bloated aristocracy owning all the land and not leaving any for the poor to work. If the people had a chance to till the ground there would be fewer thieves. All our professional thieves come from England. We have none in the rural districts."

"And yet," said Mr. Vere Saye, "the thieves can come here and have all the land they want to till. It seems they prefer stealing to working."

"Our free institutions soon cure all that," said Mr. Eton. "As soon as the emigrant sees the highest positions open to him he hopes to reach them."

"Perhaps," said the Englishman, "after the exiles have served a term or two in the penitentiary they may get into Congress, and, now I think of it, I remember some time ago hearing of one of your members of Congress who sold out the navy and pocketed some millions of dollars, on the strength of which he ran for the Senate. Your free institutions are altogether too liberal. In England a robber of that kind would pass at least twenty years of his life in looking through the bars of a prison. You remember that even Lord Bacon's great name didn't save him when he was found guilty of malfeasance in office."

"Well, I don't care," said Mr. Eton, who was not much on argument. "I go to sleep nights now in perfect comfort. I know that the chief of our police has his men on watch in every quarter of the city, and then I have a safe that will defy all the thieves in the world."

"Yet," said Mr. Vere Saye, "I shouldn't be surprised if you awoke some morning to find yourself robbed."

Mrs. Eton here interrupted the conversation, and had to be told all the story over again, while Flossy caressed the interesting though dirty little captive. Then she and Patch took him to the kitchen and gave him a complete ablution, much to the benefit of his personal appearance.

Patch remembered some clothes that had belonged to her brother in his early youth, and, running up-stairs, soon returned with a supply sufficient for the necessities of *Bene Trovato*, who shortly

appeared attired in a laced shirt, red stockings, and his chestnut curls surmounted with a crimson fez with blue silk tassels.

The company were astonished at the beauty of the little waif, now that he was dressed in clean clothes, and he was handed around and kissed by all the ladies.

The little one bore his honors unflinchingly, and seemed delighted with his new prospects, while Jupiter, which had carried the youngster on his back from the battle-field, eyed him despondingly from a distance, as if the boy had grown too distinguished for him to associate with any longer.

Just as the company passed in to tea Louise Morton returned from a ride, in company with Edgar Lane. She had been to visit a Mrs. Ellsmere, who lived about five miles distant, and, as she entered the room, her cheeks blooming and her eyes brightened with the ride, Harry thought he had never seen anything so beautiful in his life, unless, perhaps, it was the fair being who had lately left a deep impression on his mind.

Harry approached Louise affectionately, but, throwing her hat upon the sofa, she held out her hand to him with "How do you do, Harry? So you are here at last with your menagerie," and she looked contemptuously at the dogs.

"Louise," said Harry, "is that all you have to say after a three years' absence? Haven't you a kiss for one who has been away so long?" and he looked very much mortified.

"Oh, you know I'm not gushing, Harry, like Patch," said Louise. "Patch does enough of that kind of thing for two of us; but you may kiss me if you like. I didn't know you had been gone so long; it seems only the other day, and, if I remember rightly, you told me you hoped I would mend my manners when you saw me again. Do you think them improved?" she asked, cynically.

"Oh, sister," said Harry, "can you remember such trifles after the lapse of years? Salt water with me has washed out any little asperity I might have had in days gone by."

"But I," she replied, "have had no salt water to wash out mine; on the contrary, they are washed in deeper than ever."

"Louise," said her father, "you forget yourself."

"Yes, papa?"

"And you forget that Mr. Vere Saye and Mr. Eton and Miss Carrolton have not been noticed by you."

"Yes, papa? We see each other every hour in the day."

As she said this she flung a look of defiance at Mr. Vere Saye, who coolly remarked, "Miss Morton is always so jolly, one can forget being overlooked on her brother's arrival, and the joy she must feel at seeing him again."

This cut made Louise more angry than ever, and she regarded the speaker with one of her cold, steel looks—enough to freeze the blood in his veins. The look said as plainly as possible, "I hate you!" But Mr. Saye only smiled, and said nothing.

Louise seemed to be in one of her worst moods. Something had gone wrong on the ride, and she was for the moment at war with all the world. Her appearance marred the pleasure of the evening, though every one else seemed determined to be happy notwithstanding what had occurred.

As to the beautiful boy, sitting at the tea-table, she merely pointed at him and asked, "Who is that?"

"That," answered Patch, "is Benny, whom Harry rescued from some robbers. He is dressed up in some of Harry's youthful clothes. I wish you could have seen him in his old duds."

"A pauper!" said Louise. "How long is it since the poor-house was opened and the inmates invited to tea at Hawks' Roost? Papa, have you changed your *rôle*?"

"No," said Mr. Morton, "I never change my *rôle*, as you will find if you live long enough; but I will stake my existence that this child has good blood in his veins. He has an aristocratic appearance from the crown of his head to the sole of his foot. He seems perfectly at home in polite society, and is certainly much better behaved than some of us." Mr. Morton looked keenly at his daughter, who only said,

"Yes, papa?" and subsided for the moment.

"What a hateful character!" thought the Englishman.

"What a disappointment she is to me after three years' absence!" thought Harry.

"Poor Louise must be ill," said Flossy to Mrs. Eton. "I am sure if I had such a handsome brother whom I hadn't seen for three years I should feel like eating him."

"Louise is simply nasty," replied Mrs. Eton. "She would like to eat up only those whom she hates, and I believe she hates her brother."

"For my part," said Patch, "I think Louise is like Minerva—without a heart." Patch was delighted to show her knowledge of the heathen mythology, which she was studying under Miss Schwartz.

"But," said Harry, "you haven't heard half of my adventures. I haven't had time to tell you all that has occurred." Patch was on his knee in a moment with her arms around his neck.

"Do tell us some more," she said.

Flossy, very much interested, looked into his eyes. "I declare," she whispered to Mrs. Eton, "he is the sweetest fellow I ever met."

"Flossy," said Mrs. Eton, "you are incorrigible; you'd better ask him if he is engaged."

"I know he isn't," said Flossy. "He has had no chance, and I am sure he wouldn't engage himself to one of those horrid half-negroes in the West Indies. He has been looking at me out of the corner of his eye."

"Do go on, Harry," said Patch. "I am dying of curiosity."

"Well," said Harry, "when I went on board the steamboat this morning my dogs behaved in the most unaccountable manner. There was a young lady sitting by herself, and they lay down at her feet, seeming to take her under their protection. They followed her every movement, and when she changed her seat they planted themselves at her side. When we reached the landing at Saugerties the young lady stepped upon the plank to go ashore; it turned, and she was suddenly thrown into the water, but she was hardly overboard before the dogs were at her side, and soon landed her safely upon the beach. I picked her up in my arms and ran with her on board the steamboat. Dr. Preston, who was on board, took charge of her, and she was soon as well as ever."

"That doctor is an old tadpole," said Patch. "I'll bet a chicken he'll want to doctor you, Harry, with his *morus nuticolis* as soon as he gets hold of you. His favorite remedy for toothache is to seat the patient on a hot stove with his mouth full of cold water, and wait until it boils."

"Patch," said her father, "your descriptions are far from elegant. Miss Schwartz must be talked to."

"Yes, papa," said Patch as she went over to her father and kissed him, whispering, "he really does look like a tadpole," and back she flew to Harry's knee.

"I never," continued Harry, "saw anything so beautiful as this young lady. If she had been sculptured in marble her form could not have been more perfect, and a painter could scarcely have done justice to her features. Dr. Preston said she bore a strong likeness to Louise, and, now that I recognize the resemblance, it is indeed

striking. Were I to meet them together I could hardly tell them apart. The only difference I notice is that the young lady's hair is a golden brown."

Louise's eyes flashed fire. "Some milliner's apprentice, I have no doubt. She carried her advertising card in her greasy reticule, and gave you one at parting, I presume."

"No, Louise," said Harry, quietly, "she was a thoroughbred lady. Her manners were perfect, and her conversation showed education and refinement."

"And yet," said Louise, with one of her dangerous looks, "you are afraid to show her advertising card; and as for your knowledge of thoroughbreds, I doubt if your cruise among the mulattoes of the West Indies has enlightened you much in that respect. If my memory serves me, you were not very choice in your acquaintances in your youthful days."

"Louise," said Mr. Morton, "this is intolerable. Don't forget your duties to your company and the respect you owe to your brother." Louise's lip curled higher than ever, but she said nothing.

"No, Louise," said Harry, patiently, "she had no advertising card. She thanked the doctor and myself, and when I asked her name she gave it to me."

"Oh, tell us her name, Harry," said Patch; "I am dying to know it."

"I am not pledged to secrecy," said Harry, "and the name is a very simple one—Mary Gale."

If a bolt of lightning had suddenly fallen into the midst of them it could hardly have produced a greater excitement than did the announcement of this name. Mrs. Morton jumped up from her chair and gasped, "Mary Gale! Why, that was—" She stopped suddenly, for her husband's eye was fixed sternly upon her, while he became deadly pale.

"Mary Gale!" said Mr. Vere Saye, anxiously; "are you sure that was the name?"

"You may have misunderstood the name," said Mr. Morton to Harry, his lip quivering as he spoke.

"No, sir," said Harry, "I can not be mistaken, for I read the young lady's name on her traveling-bag. It's a common enough name, I am sure."

"Your heroine," said Louise, "seems to have created some excitement. Didn't she offer you her address? It would have been in keeping with the whole romantic incident."



"No," replied Harry, "she did not, and it was not the part of a gentleman in me to gratify my curiosity by asking it."

"As Harry says, the name is a common one," said Mr. Morton in a hollow voice. The company were struck with his emotion. "The name," he said, "is connected with some early associations of Mrs. Morton and myself, and I hope it will not be mentioned again. This young person could not be connected with our acquaintance, who died more than twenty years ago; did she not, Eleanor?"

"Yes, yes," said Mrs. Morton, "more than twenty years ago," and she arose and staggered toward the door. Her husband sprang to her assistance and helped her from the room.

"Courage, courage, Eleanor," he said. "Don't give way; everything depends on you." He returned to the parlor to make excuses to the company. His face was pale; he had evidently endured a severe shock.

It would have been useless to try and convince the company that there was not some mystery involved that the Mortons did not want discussed; but Mr. Morton did his best to turn the matter off.

"I am sorry," he said, "to have to apologize for Mrs. Morton, who will not be able to come down again to-night. She is very nervous, the name of the young lady having revived recollections of the past that are not agreeable; therefore I beg that the matter be not again referred to."

"And yet," said Mr. Vere Saye, "I would give anything to find this Miss Mary Gale. I would esteem it a great favor if you would give me any information regarding persons of that name. My errand to this country is principally on this account."

Mr. Vere Saye could not help noticing that Mr. Morton grew paler than ever. "I can not tell you anything that would help you in any way," he said. "The person I knew died some twenty years ago, and could not by any possibility have been related to any one in whom you are interested. The deceased was in a position of life in which you or your friends could have had no interest."

"Let me ask you one question," said the Englishman. "Had this person any children?"

"None whatever," said Mr. Morton, looking his questioner calmly in the face, while his soul was torn by conflicting emotions at being called upon to answer questions in regard to a matter evidently intensely painful to him.

"I must try and find the young lady at all hazards," said Mr.

Saye as he walked off to join the young people, who were trying in vain to be cheerful, now that all cheerfulness had been taken out of them.

At length Mrs. Eton said she must go, and requested Mr. Vere Saye to accompany her party in case they should encounter any stragglers, for she had not much faith in Mr. Eton's prowess in such a contingency.

On their arrival at Mrs. Eton's "Dove-cote" Flossy was asked to walk in and wait for her father, but Mr. Carrolton had already arrived from the city, and was waiting in the parlor, much to the satisfaction of Mr. Eton, who was anxious to learn the price of cotton.

"Cotton is firm," said Carrolton, "but here is something in the paper to interest you—an account of another great robbery."

"Ah," said Eton, "some fool, I suppose, who wouldn't follow my example and get a proper strong-box made. I defy the devil to rob me."

"Read it," said Mr. Carrolton; and Mr. Eton read as follows: "Bold Robbery!!! We learn that last night the counting-house of Eton & Co. was entered by burglars, who broke open his magnificent back-action, stone-defended, burglar-proof strong-box and abstracted a large amount of money therefrom.' This is impossible!" exclaimed Eton, jumping up; "it's a hoax!"

"Read on," said Carrolton; "or shall I read for you, as you seem excited?"

"No," said he, "I'm not excited; but I don't believe a d—d word of it."

"And, husband, dear," said Mrs. Eton, "even if the story is true, why should you get excited? The house of Eton & Co. can stand it."

"All I have in the world," said Eton, "is in that safe. But it's a lie—a hoax—and I won't believe a word of it until I see for myself."

"Let me read it," said Carrolton. "'When the clerk came in the morning he found the watchmen employed to guard the premises lashed in their bunks, fast asleep, having evidently been drugged. Their double-barreled guns lay near them with the loads drawn. The strong-box had been opened by a key and left open.'"

"Yes, yes," interrupted Eton, whose coolness was fast evaporating, "the outer door; that might happen; but the citadel—no one could have got into it—never! Carrolton, read on."

"The robbers, by some process known only to themselves,

opened all the iron doors leading to what our townsman calls the citadel, and, as the doors were not injured, they must have been furnished with keys. The thieves seem to have been waggishly inclined, as they left a memorandum stating that they had only taken seventy thousand dollars, and would call again.'"

At this point Mr. Eton fairly howled, and tore up and down the room like a madman. "Why, d—n it, Mr. Carrolton, that's the profits on two ships' cargoes, and the Lord knows when I can make it up again. I'm a ruined man. Fanny, we must take a smaller house—no more dinners, no more breakfasts—and d—n me if I ever pay Deville that supper."

"Let me continue," said Carrolton. "The fellows must have been friendly to you. Just hear the winding up; it's quite funny."

"Funny, the devil!" exclaimed Eton. "I don't see any joke about it."

"After taking the seventy thousand dollars in gold and notes," continued Carrolton, reading, "'they posted a placard on the outer door to the following effect: 'Job Eton, we take seventy thousand dollars to punish you for your meanness. We found your wife's diamonds, appropriated on a former occasion, to be French paste, valued in Paris at thirty-five hundred francs. So we take forty thousand dollars to pay us for that disappointment. Then you were so mean as to draw thirty thousand dollars from Morton's bank when a run was made upon it. So we take thirty thousand dollars to punish you for that. Try ~~and~~ do better, or we will visit you again.'"

"It's an infamous lie," roared Eton. "Those diamonds were of the first water. Carrolton, read on."

"Knowing that the house of Eton & Co. can stand any amount of shaving, we shall not hesitate to call again when we may happen to be short of funds. We recommend our friend Job to buy a dog in place of the two old women he depended on to defend his premises.'"

By this time Mr. Eton was quite subdued. He sat with his face buried in his hands, when his wife added the final feather to the camel's overburdened back.

She stepped up to her spouse, and, pulling his hands away from his face, said, sternly, "Mr. Eton, is it true that you have degraded your wife by making her wear imitation diamonds, and that I am to be held up as the laughing-stock of all New York? You old wretch! I could scratch your eyes out!"

"Why, my dear Fanny, it's all a lie. I never—"

"I don't believe a word you say," said Mrs. Eton. "I see through you now, and will never trust you again. Think how fondly I loved you, yet you made me wear paste when I thought I was wearing the finest set of diamonds in town. I shall go to Paris by the next packet, stay there three years, and entertain handsomely, and people will know that, although you are mean enough to palm off paste diamonds on your wife, she knows how to entertain as a millionaire's wife ought to. I'll stay abroad until my heart recovers from this dreadful blow. O husband! how could you treat me so when I gave you all the pure, fresh feelings of my virgin heart—you whom I loved so much?" and she burst into tears.

Mr. Eton was almost beside himself when the Englishman broke in: "So much for your boasted police force in New York city. Such perfection can only exist under the free constitution of this great country, where the eagle screams and the British lion runs away in terror at the sound; where a statesman can steal a whole navy and still be a popular leader of his party. It's enough to make a man die laughing. I told you how it would be, my dear sir."

The Job of our story had not the patience of his Scriptural namesake, and he broke out: "D—n it, Mr. Vere Saye, you are piling it on too strong. Didn't we lick you clean off the sea in our last war? and in our next we'll plant a barrel of powder in the middle of your dirty little island and blow you all to kingdom come. The house of Eton & Co., I'll have you to know, can stand twice as great a loss as this, and can hold its own with the best houses in London or elsewhere. It's an infernal lie about those diamonds being paste—got up to injure my reputation. Fanny, my darling, you shall have another set by the packet Henry Clay that will beat everything in the country, and you can get them tested by Bullion & Co."

"O my darling ducky!" said Mrs. Eton, "I knew you wouldn't see my heart break, and I shall love you better than ever. I won't go to Paris, and I won't flirt with the young men."

"Then, darling," said Mr. Eton, "order the carriage to be at the door in time to reach the next boat, for I must be in the city to-morrow as soon as possible." Then the company bade them good-night and departed—Flossy and her father for their cottage, and Mr. Vere Saye for the "Dove" tavern.

Mr. Saye had no sooner reached his room than he took from his trunk a small bundle, from which he drew out a child's suit of clothes marked "C. G." on the waistband. The cap was marked "T. G." on the inside lining. From the pocket of the dress he took a white handkerchief marked in faded letters "Mary Gale." Mr. Vere Saye had carried these relics with him for more than twenty years, through all the vicissitudes of life, which in his case had been many.

"The first clew I have yet had," said he, "to the mystery of my birth and name. I wonder who this girl can be. The name is by no means a common one, as Mr. Morton would pretend; and why all this excitement on the part of himself and wife at the mere mention of the name? There is something mysterious in it all, but I will ferret it out in good time."

Mr. Vere Saye carefully locked up his treasure, and went to bed.

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## CHAPTER XXVII.

### AGNES AND MARY GALE.

TWENTY years have passed since we have heard anything of Agnes Gale, whom we left at Gale's Point, sitting with her little daughter by the graves of Samson Goliah and Betsy Jane, with no object in life except the welfare of the little atom of humanity at her side, then just learning to lisp the name of mamma.

Agnes, when she lost her mother, her two boys, her husband, and finally her true and tried old friends, thought there was nothing else worth living for, and would have mourned away her life over the graves of her two dear friends, forgetful of the claims upon her of the little girl that was just beginning to toddle around the room. But gradually life seemed to be more endurable, as all the love she had possessed for the lost ones gradually centered in her daughter.

And so time wore on at Gale's Point, where Agnes and little Mary and the old housekeeper lived together day after day and month after month, Agnes learning to bow to the dispensations of Providence, and teaching by example to those around her the true principles of Christianity.

As regarded the necessities of life, Agnes had no fear of the future, for she understood, when her brother-in-law Charles left for China, that she had ample means in bank, and would receive six hundred dollars quarterly—a sum more than ample for her wants. She knew that Samson Goliah had left a nice little sum invested somewhere, and that when the estate was settled she would be provided for fully.

As her child was the owner of Gale House, they were always certain of a roof over their heads. After all, she thought she had much to be thankful for, as poverty was not added to her other misfortunes.

When Agnes felt her mind a little more at ease, she sent for the lawyer who had been left in charge of her affairs, in order to learn exactly how matters stood.

The lawyer informed her that there was no estate except the homestead; that, previous to his sailing for China, Charles Gale, as trustee, had converted all investments into cash, which he had no doubt taken to China as the best place to invest it; that he had left two years' salary in bank for Agnes, thinking, no doubt, that amount would be ample for her support until he could return or send remittances.

The property had thus all gone down with the ship. Five thousand dollars—the amount in bank—could not last many years even with the greatest economy, and poverty stared Agnes in the face.

She offered Gale House for sale, but no one wanted it on any terms. Nothing but ill luck had followed it ever since it was built, and it would bring, it was thought, misfortune on all who lived in it.

Agnes had no superstitious fears, and did not really regret having to remain for the present in a place endeared to her by many happy recollections.

About eighteen months after the loss of the *Nimrod*, Agnes received an anonymous letter, cautioning her to take great care of her little girl, as there was a plot on foot to steal the child. The writer advised her to go to some obscure part of the country and live under an assumed name. But where could she go? She knew of no one outside of Manchester, and she was utterly unfitted to go out into the world and buffet with its hardships.

Her lawyer, to whom she showed the letter, saw that, although the words were misspelled, the meaning was well expressed, and he gave as his opinion that it was a disguised handwriting. "It is a scheme for extorting money, no doubt," said he, "and you will

soon receive another asking for it, as a security against your being troubled again."

The lawyer advised her to stay where she was for the present, and not to mention the receipt of the letter to any one. Upon a closer examination of the epistle, the water-mark—"Crips, Albany"—appeared in one corner of the sheet in letters so faint as to be hardly distinguishable.

A month passed away before anything further occurred.

One night in December a storm was raging around Gale's Point. The sleet rattled like buckshot against the shutters, and the house shook so violently in the wind that Agnes became alarmed and clasped her little daughter closer to her bosom. She thought she had never experienced so fierce a tempest; it brought to mind the storm in which her husband had perished. "It was in such a storm as this," she said, "that husband, brother, and sister, and all our wealth went to the bottom of the ocean."

Agnes became so nervous that she was obliged to summon the housekeeper, who, quite as much terrified as herself, was glad of the opportunity for companionship. "God help the poor sailors on such a night as this, Mrs. Gale!" she said; "in all my experience I have never seen such weather in this place." As she spoke, a tree was torn up by the roots and dashed against the front door with such force as to break it in. The storm howled through the entry, which was now rapidly filling with rain and sleet. It seemed as if ten thousand Furies were at work downstairs tearing everything to pieces. The cold penetrated to the upper floor, and all the clothing they could put on did not suffice to keep the inmates warm.

Suddenly the housekeeper exclaimed, "I smell smoke, as if wood-work was on fire." Agnes held her child close to her bosom and opened the chamber-door, when the smoke burst into the room, almost choking them.

"Come," said Agnes to the housekeeper, "the house is on fire. It only needed this to make our case deplorable indeed."

The old housekeeper was almost fainting, and so bewildered that, if left to herself, she would have fallen a victim to the flames. But Agnes, with a strength and resolution that astonished herself, urged her along to the front door, which they reached just as the flames leaped up the stairs. In another moment the whole upper part of the house was ablaze.

Agnes bent her footsteps toward the old gardener's cottage, a

few yards distant, carrying her child and urging the old housekeeper along, while the storm beat down on her devoted head.

When the gardener was awakened he found Gale House all in a blaze, and the forms and features of the wretched fugitives as visible in the glare as if it were daylight. They were made as comfortable as possible, but the poor old housekeeper had received so great a shock from cold and fright that she died before morning. Agnes's last friend on earth was thus taken from her at a time when her assistance was most needed.

The flames rushed through Gale House till it seemed as if all the fires of hell had been let loose to destroy this unlucky mansion. The flames leaped from room to room, burst through the windows, and chased each other with demoniacal delight. The shore for two miles was brilliantly illuminated, and two schooners, under bare poles, lying broadside to wind, were brought in view, their spars and rigging reflecting the light. The men on board, roused by the unexpected fire, springing up suddenly as if for their special benefit, hoisted the head of the forestay-sails, and, putting their helmets up, in a few moments were safe at anchor under Gale's Point, instead of being thrown in wrecks on the shore.

The house, all alight, having performed this friendly office, burned fiercely for half an hour longer, the storm hurling the burning rafters for an immense distance through the air.

The flames seemed to cling even to the solid granite walls of the house, lengthening out the agony of Agnes's mind, who prayed that the end might come quickly. She bore this misfortune as she had borne all her other ills, although she saw nothing before her but the direst poverty for herself and child, who now lay sleeping quietly on the gardener's bed, its beautiful face lighted up by the flames shining through the window.

Finally the walls fell in with a tremendous crash, the sudden darkness that followed proclaiming that the elements had gained the victory over the strongest habitation ever built in that part of the country.

Agnes now fully realized the situation. The only shelter she owned in the world was the little hut in which she now rested. Not a spare dollar was left her, for her last quarter's allowance had gone into the flames.

She knew not what to do. It was not until morning dawned that she found her friend the housekeeper was dead, this blow adding another pang to the many she had already borne. But she was



astonished at her own endurance, as she proceeded to prepare the body of the old housekeeper for the grave. "Poor thing!" said she, "I have not even money enough to bury her; she will have a pauper's grave."

The fire had awakened some of the people in the village, and the church-bell had tolled. Several men started for the fire, but the violence of the storm was so great that very few had the hardihood to persevere, and they arrived only when the house was a ruin.

One old man, more thoughtful than the rest, repaired to the scene in the morning with a covered wagon, some blankets, and a bottle of New England rum, which he regarded as a specific for all the ills that flesh is heir to. As he neared the house he saw the form of the old gardener seated against a tree. The old man had started for the village and had sunk down and died, overcome by the wind and cold.

When the good Samaritan reached the gardener's hut he found Agnes sitting calm and composed, with her babe in her lap, waiting for the worst to come. She thankfully accepted the provisions the old man had brought, for little Mary was beginning to get hungry.

"Now, missus," said the old man, "you've still a home, for my house is open, and my wife will make you welcome."

Agnes thanked him warmly. "I will go," she said, "but I can not leave *her* in the cold; she is dead, but she would not have left me." So the old man deposited the body of the housekeeper in his wagon, and, when all was ready, Agnes left the spot where the happiest as well as the most miserable days of her existence had been passed.

The old man's wife, who was a Quakeress, received Agnes kindly and assigned her a neat little room. "Daughter," she said, "thee can have this home as long as thee likes, and when thee comes to thy own again we shall be sorry to lose thee." Agnes thanked the good woman for her kindness, and slept soundly that night, with her child hugged to her bosom.

Next day the villagers came with offers of service, and several of her acquaintances wished her to make a home with them; but the old man and his wife were unwilling to let her go, and she was perfectly contented to remain with them.

The next day Agnes sent for her lawyer, and asked him to tell her what she had to depend upon.

"You have," said he, "about one thousand dollars left in bank,

and that is all, for Gale's Point wouldn't bring a hundred dollars. People are superstitious about it. You should leave these parts and try with your talents to make a living in the city. But I will speak more fully when I return from Gale's Point, where I am going to take a look."

When the lawyer reached the scene of the fire he found nothing but a heap of ruins, but, on looking around, he saw half buried in the snow a tin-can that had recently contained turpentine, and near it a bunch of tow. "This means that an incendiary has been at work," said he to himself. There were wheel-marks leading from the place toward the village, but so mixed with others that it was impossible to trace them far.

When the lawyer returned to Agnes he said: "I have learned enough to know that it is not safe for you to remain in this part of the country. You must go elsewhere and lose your identity. To be plain with you, somebody is seeking your life and that of your child. Do you suspect any one?"

"No," returned Agnes. "Why should any one wish to harm me? I have never injured anybody, and surely no one could be so wicked as to harm this sweet babe."

"I am a practical man, Mrs. Gale," said the lawyer, "and feel it my duty to put you on your guard. You must live somewhere under an assumed name, where you can not be identified until your daughter is old enough to take care of herself. I will go with you to New York and put you under the care of a lawyer—a friend of mine—who will assist you with his advice and, if necessary, with his purse."

"Oh, no," said Agnes, "I must always be independent. I have talents by which I can support my daughter and myself, thanks to my good mother, who taught me many useful things; but I shall be glad to have the advice of your friend."

So it was settled that she should leave Manchester immediately, as the lawyer did not think her safe where she was.

Agnes parted with her kind friends with great regret. They were very sorry to lose both her and little Mary, who had wound herself strongly about their hearts.

So Agnes, under the assumed name of Agnes Samson, went to New York, where she was introduced to an old lawyer named Bernard, who secured for her two neatly furnished rooms in John Street. She moved from these quarters and occupied a number of other apartments at different times, but finally returned to her old rooms,

which had been improved and refurnished. For the last five years she had again assumed her rightful name, as she was never quite contented under an assumed one, and she loved the sound of the name that had been her husband's.

In the second story of No. 689 John Street, in a pleasant sitting-room adorned with some pretty water-colors and simple ornaments that gave a home-look to the apartment, sat, by the light of an astral lamp, a young and beautiful girl framing a water-color drawing in most artistic style. A lady, somewhat tall and of a pallid complexion, was looking at the artist. Her luxuriant hair was white as snow, while a pair of large dark eyes illuminated a sweet face, but one that had evidently seen grief in its worst forms. The two were Agnes Gale and her daughter Mary, the young lady who was the subject of Harry Morton's adventure on board the *Rip Van Winkle*.

"My darling," said Agnes, "you have done that drawing beautifully. I think it your *chef-d'œuvre*; and the frame is certainly a masterpiece of decoration. Where do you get all your taste?"

"Why, mamma," said Mary, "all I have in the way of talent I inherited from you."

"Ah, my dear child," said Agnes, "you inherited it from one whom you never saw—your dear father. He had all the talents you possess in an eminent degree. But tell me what is the subject of your picture, and whence did you draw the inspiration, if I may so express myself?"

"Well, mamma, I dreamed it. The picture represents a ship coming into port with all sail set and with a signal up for a pilot. That schooner is the pilot-boat launching a small boat, and the man in the ship's chains has thrown a line to the small boat, which will be pulled alongside while the ship is under full sail—a dangerous performance if not skillfully executed. Those people crowding to the side of the ship have been a long time away from home, and are anxiously looking for the pilot. That's the captain with a trumpet in his hand. I intend soon to paint a companion-picture to this—a ship stranded on the coast of New Jersey. This picture I will call 'Expectation,' the second, 'Disappointment'—the two phases of life that make up the sum of our existence."

"But how beautifully you have executed the details of the drawing—all the tracery of ropes and rigging! and how cleverly you have managed the lights and shadows! I never could do anything equal to this."

"Yet, mother, you taught me all I know."

"But how did you acquire a knowledge of the ropes and sails?"

"Why, mother dear, I procured a copy of Darcy Lever's "Sheet Anchor," and before I commenced a marine picture I learned the names of all the ropes and sails in a ship. But I wasted a great deal of paint and paper before I reached my present state of perfection, as you are pleased to term it. This picture is, I assure you, born of disappointment enough to almost dishearten me from attempting to paint its companion."

"My dear child," said Agnes, "ours is but a life of disappointment from the beginning to the end, yet the greatest works in the world have been perfected after repeated obstacles have been conquered. It is the very disappointments we encounter that makes success so sweet when we at last achieve it. I know this from my own experience. At one time misfortunes so accumulated upon me that I thought myself accursed, yet by patience and perseverance I have been enabled to get along and appreciate the good that God gives me. I am satisfied with my lot, and, while I can have my darling daughter all to myself, and see the beauty and virtue with which God has endowed her, I can have no more real disappointment on earth."

Mary kissed her mother affectionately. "You are the sweetest and vainest of mothers," said she—"so vain of me, who am but a weak reflection of yourself. I can never be so good as you are, nor bear with fortitude half the misfortunes you have endured. But your golden days are yet to come, and in the evening of life you will be amply repaid for the sorrows you have borne. I don't know why, but I feel like a prophetess speaking from inspiration."

"God grant that your prophecy may prove true, my dear child; but I have learned never to put my trust in the future, and have never hoped for more than a peaceful, quiet life with you, such as we are living now. But I am getting anxious about your health, and that pain in your side worries me. I wish for your sake we could move into the country."

"For your own sake, too, mother mine," said Mary; "for you would have some color return to those pale cheeks of yours if you could have the bracing country air for a while."

"I have been here eighteen years, Mary, but I never thought of a change before, for my health has been good, although I am not naturally robust."

"Well, mother," said Mary, "I think we had better go into the country for a while, even if we have to work the harder when

we come back. I saw an advertisement in the paper this morning, but I didn't pay much attention to it, because, if I accepted the place it offered, I should be separated a while from you."

"Get the paper and read the advertisement," said Agnes, raising no objection to the separation, and Mary read as follows :

"'A lady of position is desirous of procuring the services of a young lady who will engage to instruct two pupils in French and German, and, if possible, in music, and painting in water-colors. Any young lady who will suit will be treated as a member of the family and liberally compensated for her services. Address Hawks' Roost, Catskill.'

"What do you think of that, mother ? It seems to be a favorable opportunity. The place is very salubrious, and I am satisfied I could suit the people, and keep up my engagement with them after my return to the city."

"No doubt the terms are liberal enough," said Agnes, "but rich people generally require all your time, and I should see very little of you, while you, anxious to be with me, would worry over our separation and want to run over often to look after me. That would tend to make your employers dissatisfied—that is the way of the world. Then how can I leave my French classes, that have just commenced the fall term ? And then I have recently taken five new music scholars. I could not go into the country to be near you without disarranging all my plans. But I'll tell you how we can arrange it. You can go to the country for the remaining part of the season, and can spend Sundays with me. You must have a change or you will be ill. This sedentary life has already done you harm."

Mary shook her head. "What !" she exclaimed, "be away from my own dear mother a week without seeing her ? Why, I never did such a thing in my life."

"But it's only for a short time, darling," said Agnes, "and then you are provided with occupation all winter, if the place suits you, and you suit the place—which I am sure you will."

Mary was finally persuaded to answer the advertisement. But before she did so Agnes thought it prudent to send for Mr. Bernard, without whose advice she never did anything. When the old gentleman heard the proposition he highly approved it. "I know Mr. Morton, of Hawks' Roost, by reputation," he said. "He is a man of great wealth and influence, and has a charming family. But Mary must go under an assumed name. I lately received a letter

from your lawyer friend, Mr. Lindsay, of Boston, in which he says you should have retained your assumed name of Samson, as inquiries have been made about you by a person in whom he has no confidence. He fears you are still threatened with danger."

"Gracious heaven!" said Agnes, "is not fate tired of persecuting me? I had better keep my darling at my side and never lose sight of her."

"No," said Mr. Bernard, "she would be safer in the care of influential friends, who have means to protect her and who could at a moment's notice invoke the arm of the law. Here she may meet danger in the street even in the daytime. It would be well for the future to have such a powerful friend as Mr. Morton, who is one of the most influential men in New York. Mr. Lindsay," continued the old gentleman, "in writing to me impresses me strongly with the necessity of your preserving a strict incognito for a time, for he feels assured that the same person or persons who set fire to Gale House are intent on doing injury to you and yours. He hopes in time to ferret out the villains, but meanwhile you must assume your old name; your daughter should appear, therefore, at Hawks' Roost as Mary Samson."

"I will be governed by your advice, my dear friend," said Agnes; "but why should any one wish to persecute such a harmless, insignificant being as I am? I am sure no one who knew my sweet child would wish to harm her."

"No one can fathom the motives that govern the human breast," replied Mr. Bernard. "The qualities you mention might be a greater inducement to the commission of a crime. It's better for your daughter that these people should neither see nor know her. Mr. Lindsay is a very far-seeing person, and he has ascertained that somebody wants to find out your whereabouts to do you harm. Now, my dear Mrs. Gale, you must follow his advice to the letter. I will communicate with him and keep you informed of all that may occur. You have faced too many misfortunes to quail before a danger that, after all, may be only imaginary. When your daughter goes out let her be closely veiled, and keep her with you in the house as much as possible."

"That decides me, then, to go into the country," said Agnes, "for the child can not stand being cooped up in the house. She is suffering now. I will answer the advertisement at once."

"The sooner the better," said Mr. Bernard, "and I will procure some letters of recommendation, such as are necessary before

you can get into those fashionable houses, although I am sure if they could see your daughter they wouldn't insist on letters."

After Mr. Bernard had departed Agnes told her daughter of the arrangement, and Mary agreed to go, and even consented to the change of name, much as she disliked any approach to untruth or mystery.

In due time the answer came to Mary's letter of application: Mrs. Morton would be pleased to see Miss Samson at Hawks' Roost.

Agnes's tears that night bedewed her pillow as she thought of the parting with her daughter. Mary, to save her mother pain, had never told her all of the story of her fall into the river, and something (she could not tell what) prevented her mentioning the young officer who bore her in his arms from the beach. There was a pleasure in thinking of him that her maidenly modesty tried to shun, yet it refreshed her spirits like pleasant breezes from the ocean.

Mary felt sad at leaving her parent, even for a day. She had never been away on an errand, even for an hour, that she did not hasten back home with winged feet to tell her mother all that she had seen.

Her preparations for departure were soon made. She took with her the most difficult and choicest pieces of music, and the most finished of her drawings, as specimens of her skill.

The morning that the letter signed "Mary Samson" reached Hawks' Roost the Morton family were at breakfast.

Mr. Morton handed the letter, unopened, to his wife, finished his breakfast, and, bidding his family good-by with his usual formality, departed in a great hurry to take the down boat, which touched at Catskill at ten o'clock. He was going eastward on business, and would be gone ten days.

After her husband had departed Mrs. Morton broke the seal of her letter and presently exclaimed, "Girls, did you ever see such beautiful handwriting as this? It's like copperplate, and the letter is so well expressed!"

"Oh, how beautiful!" exclaimed Patch; "and she speaks French and German, and plays the piano and paints in water-colors. I wonder how old she is, and if she's pretty."

Louise glanced carelessly at the letter and threw it down on the table. "Some stupid old prig, I suppose," said she, "and the old stereotyped writing-master's letter, which she paid somebody twenty-five cents for writing. Mamma, I hope you won't have any old prigs about the house. Miss Schwartz is as much as I can

stand, and I seldom come in contact with her ; but this Miss Samson, who is strong-minded, no doubt, as her name implies, will have to go over the languages with me, and I could never benefit by any instruction unless the teacher is a refined, lady-like person. I should always be in bad humor while such a person is about."

"It will no doubt be a hard thing to suit you all," said Mrs. Morton, "but I can promise one thing—no one shall come here to be thrown intimately with you unless she is perfectly lady-like and refined."

"That's enough," said Patch. "Now, mamsy, write and tell Miss Samson to hurry up, for I want to commence water-colors."

The letter to Mary was written without further discussion.

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## CHAPTER XXVIII.

### NEW GUESTS AT HAWKS' ROOST.

SINCE the night of Harry's adventure on the road great changes had taken place at Hawks' Roost. Deville and George May had taken up their quarters at the Lamb Tavern. The officers of the Curlew were expected, consisting of Commander Ware Conrad ; the first lieutenant, Mr. Berry Sharp ; the surgeon, Dr. Bones ; and the sailing-master, Mr. Slings. Rooms were provided, and every arrangement made in regard to their comfort, and to receive them with hospitality.

Bene Trovato had become the pet of the household, and was so greatly attached to Patch that he would only be separated from her when the dogs were about. Then he would mount his friend Jupiter and gallop off at the risk of breaking his neck. The boy would stand at the back of Patch's chair, with his arms around her neck, looking at her with his great black eyes, but never a sound came from his lips. "Poor little Tot !" Patch would say, "where is your mother ?" Then large tears would well up in the boy's eyes, but smiles would soon chase them away again.

Mr. Vere Saye had seemed greatly interested in the boy, and expressed a desire to examine the parcels captured with him to see what they would develop.

"This is a rum country, by Jove !" said he to Harry Morton. "I'm writing a book on America, and perhaps may find an incident



here worth recording." Mr. Saye accordingly obtained from Harry a minute account of the whole affair. When Harry reached that part of the narrative where the man who had been knocked down talked incoherently of Bill Slicer, and the prospect of the boss giving him a dose of the cats in case he lost the boy, Mr. Saye remarked: "Of course these men were sailors; their slang proves that; and they were evidently under some control, and were deviating from the instructions of their chief. I presume they were river pirates—a class of thieves well known in London, who always have a vessel nominally engaged in trade that is the receptacle of their plunder."

After Harry had finished his story he and Mr. Saye examined the parcels captured from the thieves. The largest one contained a number of burglars' tools and a heavy double-barreled pistol.

"Humph!" said the Englishman, "it's lucky for you the dogs were so quick and attacked those fellows in the rear. They hadn't counted on the animals, and thought they could easily overpower you."

"These are English thieves," continued Mr. Saye; "I judge so from the fact that their tools are of English manufacture. I've seen a lot of similar articles in England. When I was at Magdalen College, Oxford, I was one of a party of students that laid in wait at a country house to capture a gang of burglars. We succeeded, and the tools we secured were of this description. Ah! what have we here? A key big enough to knock a man over with, labeled 'Jakob Moses.' One of these robbers is a pal of this Jew, who probably keeps a hole somewhere, and the goods are run into his place when he is away."

"You speak," said Harry, "as if you knew all about them."

"Putting this and that together," replied Mr. Saye, "one comes to certain conclusions. I may be wide of the mark, but, at all events, there is no doubt these men are burglars. Their kit would be evidence against them in any court of justice."

"If you could only find them!" said Harry.

"We have the boy," said Vere Saye, "and he is the key to the whole mystery."

"But he can't talk," said Harry.

"True," replied the other, "but he can be taught to do so. I visited the Deaf and Dumb Asylum not long ago, and they do wonderful things in the way of making people explain themselves. The boy is evidently of good parentage—Italian or Spanish, I should say. The devilish devices of these burglars and river thieves are too

horrible to contemplate. They steal boys of tender age to put through windows or over doors, who open the front or back entrance to a house and then give them admittance. You see, Mr. Morton, we have a great deal of this kind of business going on in England; that's why I am so familiar with it. The boy has been partially mutilated about the tongue, so that he can not reveal anything. He is without speech—a mere animal; yet no doubt he will enter into what he considers the fun of stealing with great gusto, for he has no idea that it is wrong. If you say so we will experiment with him to-night and see what are his methods."

"That depends," said Harry, "upon whether Patch will lend him to us. She never lets him out of her sight, for fear the thieves will recapture him. The boy occupies a crib in her room, and Patch sleeps with one eye open watching him."

"And yet," said Vere Saye, "they will get him again in spite of all precautions, even if the boy doesn't run away of his own accord, and find his way back to his old associates. No doubt he is much more attached to his old way of living than to his present mode."

"Pon my soul!" continued Vere Saye, "here's the little fellow's shoes and stockings wrapped up in a piece of paper with writing on it that would puzzle a lawyer. Let's try ~~and~~ <sup>to</sup> read it, for it may contain some information."

With much difficulty the following was deciphered :

9 HUNKY DORY.

OLD CRIBBER AND SWASH BUCKLER: Your hooks and hangers are lovely. Wouldn't you have been clinky if you'd got your grapplers on to that Chinese junk? Well done, old Shiner, and right out of port. Eighty thousand shiners, you know, and twenty thousand in silk-worms. Old mud-scow wouldn't swim. Lightered her thoroughly; sent the passengers to spend the summer on Turk's Island. Saingier didn't go. Thank God, no cats this time, and the damned boy left ashore. Lots of lush, and Bill Slicer a trump. Gave every man a ticker and a hundred buzzards. Get on board or you'll never be a millionaire, which we all are.

Yours,

B. KNOCKER.

This letter had never been posted, but was evidently kept for an opportunity.

"Who could make anything out of all this jargon?" said Harry.

"Those who talk jargon, of course," replied Mr. Vere Saye; "and if you will let me keep this letter, I will make it out, even if I have to send it to England to be translated. There are plenty of fellows there who, if they ever get the run of a thing, will soon unravel it; and I'd like also to keep this big key, which may lock up as many secrets as the key of the Bastile."

"You are welcome to the whole kit," said Harry, "for I don't see what use I could make of this outfit unless I turn burglar, which at present I have no idea of doing."

"Perhaps the transition would not be so great as you imagine, for you know the naval profession is only a system of legalized piracy."

"What, sir," exclaimed Harry, indignantly, "my noble profession piracy?"

"Don't fire a broadside into me until you hear me," said the Englishman, laughing. "You Americans fly off the handle so quickly; just let me explain. Are you not brought up in the navy to think that prize-money is the chiefest blessing a sailor should pray for? And don't you hope for bloody wars and sickly seasons? Do you take any account of an old friend's life beyond scratching his name off your navy-list when he shuffles off this mortal coil? When you capture a merchant-vessel, don't you loot her from stem to stern, though perhaps the owner of the cargo never harmed your country in his life?"

"Yes," said Harry, "but that's reprisal for injuries sustained at the hands of the enemy."

"Then," said Vere Saye, "because you happen to have had a feud with John Smith, you would take the property of his relations in order to indemnify yourself?"

"But," said Harry, "these are not parallel cases. The laws of nations justify these things; it's the only way the weak have of retaliating on the strong. The laws of the land prohibit burglary."

"All laws," said Vere Saye, "should be founded on common sense, and are supposed to be made for the benefit of mankind. Do you benefit mankind by setting fire to a merchant-ship, as burglars, after robbing a house, sometimes apply the torch in very wantonness? What great difference is there between burglary and the operations of a ship's company on a hostile coast, where perhaps a large majority of the people are opposed to the war? The invaders don't even pay their victims the courtesy of opening their doors with nice-looking tools, but knock them right and left, not caring

how many innocent people may be killed. You navy people have not the excuse of burglars, who generally are ignorant ruffians that have never been taught to control their passions, while you profess to be educated Christian gentlemen, whose business it is to see in times of peace that no one on the high seas breaks the laws, while in time of war you become the greatest marauders in the world."

"But," said Harry, "we are obliged to do these things under instructions from our government."

"Yes," replied the other, "but you act very willingly. Supposing your parents had a feud with one of their neighbors; would you think it right if they should order you to set fire to his hayricks and injure his property in every way you could devise? Do you ever think of any method of ameliorating the horrors of war, or of rendering it less severe to innocent non-combatants?"

"No," said Harry; "the only way is to render the war as unpleasant as possible to the enemy's people, so that they will protest against its further continuance."

"Yes," said Vere Saye, "on the principle that, if your enemy is prostrate with a burning fever, you would harass him until his family exhorts him to beg your mercy. Or, if his house were on fire, you would fan the flames until he surrenders. He must be a subtle casuist who could convince himself of the necessity of destroying the property of private citizens to avenge the wrongs committed by a government. You might as well slaughter all the doves because the hawks happen to kill your chickens."

"I am afraid," said Harry, "that you will never convince me that making prize-money is wrong. I should only like a chance to make some."

"So the burglar argues," said Vere Saye. "He thinks it's all right to live at other folks's expense, and looks forward to a burglary just as you would look forward to running down and securing a prize."

"But what is this in bag No. 3? Ah! here's prize-money—a *rouleau* of gold—doubloons at that, a pair of diamond ear-rings, a gold bracelet. These fellows have evidently just made a raid on some one's house."

The other articles found were only burglars' tools, but each bag contained a loaded pistol.

"It's lucky for you, lieutenant," said the Englishman, "that they hadn't a chance to use these weapons, or your prospects of future prize-money would have been small. These are English

pistols. Everything proclaims these fellows to be English—their slang, their tools, and their fire-arms.”

“I am glad of it,” said Harry, “for the honor of my country. I do not want Americans to be engaged in such practices—”

“Or even taking prizes?” said Vere Saye. “My countrymen are sad fellows, I admit; they are pirates by inheritance, and it will take many centuries to eradicate the seeds of piracy, which was the distinguishing character of our forefathers. It is to be hoped that sufficient of the hardihood of our ancestors may remain to enable England to fulfill her destiny, and carry civilization to the farthest confines of the earth.”

“Don’t you suppose,” said Harry, “that we Americans will have something to do with that destiny and the civilization you speak of?”

“But what are you Americans, after all,” said the other, “but offshoots of those robber Scandinavians, who, settling in England, have made the most invincible nation on the face of the globe? As England’s power declines, the United States, with its millions of freemen, will become the greatest nation of the earth, and bid defiance to the world in arms. But that day is a long way off, and neither you nor I will live to see it; but we will live to see England dictating laws for the world. Her power and her flag will be dominant in every part of the globe, and the same robber spirit that actuated our forefathers will still exist in the person of the English burglar, who will manifest himself on all occasions, when prize-money is to be obtained, either by the ‘jimmy’ or the more effectual round shot.”

That afternoon Harry was at the landing to receive his friends, the officers of the *Curlew*. When the *Rip Van Winkle* arrived, the expected guests were all there, headed by Commander Conrad, a handsome man of thirty; Mr. Berry Sharp, the first lieutenant; Surgeon Bones, and Sailing-Master Slings.

Harry welcomed his friends, and, leading them to the carriage, they were soon whirled away to Hawks’ Roost.

The arrival of naval officers was an event in the life of the people at Hawks’ Roost. Harry Morton was the only specimen they had ever seen, and he was so prepossessing, or, as Miss Carrolton remarked, such a “conquering-looking hero,” that they naturally expected to see a lot more of the same kind come on shore from the *Curlew*.

Patch leaned out of the front window and stretched her neck to

catch the first glimpse of the heroes, and, when the carriage at last appeared, she hauled in her head so suddenly that she gave it a hard knock against the sash, calling out to Louise, "Here they come, the whole kit of them. Come quick, Lou!"

"I smelled the tar some time ago," said Louise, "but I haven't the faintest desire to come any closer than I can help to our country's defenders. I suppose I shall have to submit to the infliction for two weeks, but shall see as little of the heroes as possible."

"Now look here, Louise Morton," said Patch, "although you try to play the great high-cockalorum of the house, and act as if a prince wasn't good enough for you, you are just as crazy about handsome men as any girl I know. You don't this minute know which you are most in love with—Mr. Deville, George May, or Edgar Lane. Now don't let's have any more of your airs."

"Hush this instant," said Louise; "don't dare to mention Edgar Lane's name with mine."

"Shake not your gory locks at me." You know what I know, and if you don't behave I'll let the cat out of the bag."

"Patch," said Louise, "you are the most ridiculous child I ever knew, and so choice in your expressions!"

"Here, Benny Contralto," said Patch to her little charge, "run and see the defenders of the nation." As Commander Conrad alighted she exclaimed, "There is the handsomest man I've seen yet except brother Harry—a form like Apollo, an eye like the eagle, a nose like a warrior, a mouth that means yes and no when he says it, and a set of teeth that would cost six hundred dollars at the dentist's. Now comes the first lieutenant. I heard Harry call his name, Berry Sharp. He's a darling—hair parted in the middle, *nez retroussé*, figure dancing-dollish, complexion milk-and-water, legs inexpressible, air overpowering, age between fifteen and thirty. Miss Flossy will have the high-strikes when she sees him, and will wonder at once whether he is engaged. I shall call him Poodle, his hair is so beautifully frizzled. I am sure he had it done on board the Rip Van Winkle by the old darkey barber. What do you think of him, Benny Tomato?"

"Patch," said Louise, "you are too ridiculous for anything in this world."

"I know it," said Patch; "but here comes out old Dr. Sawbones. Bless me! he looks jalap all over. See his nose; he must be obliged to use the mainsail when he has a cold. One leg's shorter

than the other. No, I'm mistaken—it's longer than the other, and he walks like a jumping-jack."

"I wonder what induced Harry Morton to bring such a ridiculous set of people here," said Louise; "it's positively shameful!"

"There is old Gin Slings," broke in Patch; "only one arm. He won't suit you at all, Louise; he can only offer you one hand, and that would never satisfy *you*."

"Patch," said Louise, "do try and have a little sense. I believe I won't go down to tea."

"You had better treat Harry's friends politely," said her sister. "I am sure if he was to bring a lot of Sandwich Islanders and tell me they were his bosom friends, I'd let 'em make love to me."

"You ridiculous child, to talk of love! You'd better be thinking of your lessons—"

"As you were when you went to Madame Faucet's school," interrupted Patch.

"O Patch!" said Louise, deprecatingly.

"Patch me no patches," said her sister. "But I'll be as mean as shrimp-soup or catnip-pie if you don't make up your mind to be pleasant to Harry's friends, for the dear old fellow has set his heart on their all going away from here with agreeable reminiscences—that's the word, I believe—and you know, when you wish to do so, you can make yourself as pleasant as huckleberry-pudding."

"I must acknowledge," said Louise, "that your similes are very beautiful. I wonder if you learned those classical expressions from Miss Schwartz."

"Never you mind," retorted Patch. "Do as I say, or you'll wish Ossa and Pelim had tumbled on you. There's classics for you."

Louise, being well aware of Patch's ability to harass her, said at last, "Well, let me alone, and I'll do my best to be polite to the creatures, though it will be a horrid bore."

Patch went off laughing, and a wonderful clatter she made in her preparations to appear at dinner. She scanned her dresses, hanging in wild confusion—not one without a rip or a tear—saying to herself: "I wonder what Poodle would like. He is about my style. Louise will either have to take Deville or George May. Whichever she doesn't happen to fancy for the evening Mrs. Eton will get. Flossy Carrolton will want Harry, whom she is very sweet upon; or, like a fickle thing, she may light upon the eagle Conrad. Mamma can entertain the doctor with full particulars of the time when we all had measles and whooping-cough. As for

old Bacchus Slings, Miss Bane will glory in him and he in her. She can tell him how near she came to being a millionaire when she owned a ten-acre lot half a mile outside of Albany, only the town grew up in the other direction and the lot was sold for taxes. Then there'll be the handsome Englishman, and there's old Eton and Mr. Carrolton. I guess I'll wear a white muslin and pink sash. I think that will make Poodle my slave for ever."

Patch had with great difficulty obtained permission to appear at the dinner-table—her first appearance in company—for she was one of the irrepressibles, and her parents never knew when she would utter one of her brusque sayings, which, though they might have the merit of originality, were sometimes very annoying to company.

Patch was now in a sad quandary. On close inspection, the white muslin dress, which she expected would bring Lieutenant Berry Sharp to her feet, was found to be split down the back. Other dresses were stained or torn so as to be quite out of the question, and she had to be satisfied with a white poplin rather the worse for wear. "If Poodle won't bite at this," she said, "he can go elsewhere; but"—surveying herself in the glass—"he'll be hard to please if he doesn't like my face and figure," and she pirouetted around the room, whistling.

When Louise and Patch were dressed they accompanied their mother to the reception-room, where the guests were to assemble. The naval officers had not yet appeared, but Deville and George May were there to greet the ladies. Then Mr. Vere Saye came in, and was introduced to Deville. As the two men shook hands they looked at each other in astonishment. Each saw in the other the counterpart of himself, the only difference being that one had the olive complexion of the Italian, the other the fair skin of the Anglo-Saxon.

"By Jove!" ejaculated Vere Saye as he held Deville's hand, "I wish I had had you at Oxford to pull next oar to mine. We could have beaten the world. Our strength not being well balanced, I pulled the other fellows round, and the coxswain had to steer against me."

"I envy you your physique, sir," said Deville; "it is magnificent."

"That's good," replied Vere Saye, "for young Hercules to remark. I think there's hardly a featherweight of difference between us, and you are the only match I've met for years." They were



indeed a splendid pair of men, and, but for the dissimilarity of complexion, might have been taken for brothers.

"Antinous is the handsomest," whispered Patch.

"Pray," inquired her mother, "which is Antinous?"

"Why, Mr. Deville, of course," replied Patch.

"What nickname have you given me?" said George May, who overheard the conversation.

"You are Prince Gold Star," said Patch, "and Miss Flossy shall be Cherry."

"A pretty name," said May, "and I'll wear it."

The naval officers next appeared with Harry, who presented them to his mother and the assembled company. Commander Conrad made an excellent impression by his fine manners, and the others were by no means so bad as Patch had represented them to be to Louise.

When Commander Conrad was introduced to Louise he thought he had never seen so beautiful a woman. He gazed so long that it almost amounted to rudeness. Louise was accustomed to admiration, yet her lip curled and she was turning away when the officer entered into a pleasant strain of conversation, which, from its novelty, interested her more than usual.

The commander had a determined air that carried great weight with it, and Louise, who was not accustomed to having any one differ with her in conversation, felt that he dominated over her. She hardly knew whether to like Conrad or hate him, and was fascinated by this new feeling of not being able to tyrannize over a man at sight.

It was as if she had drunk some new kind of wine that had exhilarated her more than usual. Yet when Conrad left her side a reaction took place like that which occurs when the wine has ceased to stimulate.

It seemed very tame to Louise when afterward she had to converse with George May and Deville, who were continually telling her how beautiful she was and how exquisitely she dressed. In a short conversation Commander Conrad had impressed her more than any one had ever done on first acquaintance. Still she felt as if she'd like to hate him, as she did Vere Saye, who so far had never paid her any particular attention.

When Mrs. Eton and Flossy came in they imparted new life to the company. The strangers were delighted with these last comers, and Mrs. Morton's fears lest her party would prove a failure vanished.

When dinner was announced Mrs. Morton sat at the head of the table, and Miss Bane at the opposite end, supported by Mr. Slings and Mr. Eton. Louise had Commander Conrad, while Deville, who escorted Mrs. Eton, sat on Louise's right. George May handed in Flossy, who was disappointed in not getting Harry Morton as an escort. Patch secured her "Poodle," as she had made up her mind to do from the first. As for Mr. Carrolton, he wandered in on his own account and took the chair that was left vacant. The guests were seated in a manner to bring people together supposed to be agreeable to each other. How seldom do dinner-givers apportion their guests so that people will be in accord ! People are generally placed at table according to rank, or for some other reason that the hosts think imperative ; hence most dinners are mere formal entertainments—a bore to all concerned.

The dinner of which we write was no exception to the rule, and Mrs. Morton breathed a sigh of relief when it was over. Two people were extremely uncomfortable ; one was Deville, the other George May. It was some weeks since they had met Louise, and the country air had developed in her a beauty and freshness even superior to what she possessed before.

She was now playing a new part, and seemed to make every effort to please Commander Conrad, whom she had never seen before, scarcely noticing Deville, so eager was she in listening to the naval officer.

Remarkable as Deville was for coolness and equanimity of temper, he could hardly conceal the jealousy that was gnawing at his heart. As for George May, he scarcely heard Flossy's numerous questions, and answered them at random.

When dinner was over and the guests adjourned to the parlor, Louise adroitly led the commander to a quiet corner, where there was a sofa that would hold but two people.

Louise took no notice of her two old admirers, though she knew they loved her with their whole souls. May and Deville were aware of each other's feelings, and the former, who felt a devotion to Deville second only to the love he felt for Louise, could have resigned her to his friend, and been willing to see him bask in the sunshine of her smiles for the rest of his days ; but he was not willing that any one else than Deville should be so favored.

What, then, was their chagrin when these two saw the object of their adoration devoting herself with such warmth of feeling to a stranger !

Louise felt sure of these two men, and her heart would sometimes warm toward them, but she had never experienced that heavenly feeling of love which comes unsought and betrays itself in the mellow, quivering voice, and the impassioned look which tells a history no words could relate.

Had Louise at last succumbed, or was this but a passing fancy? Be it what it might, Deville and George were exceedingly disturbed. May sat stupidly by Flossy's side, scarcely uttering a word, and Deville wandered over to where Vere Saye was standing and entered into conversation with him.

Patch had gone out after dinner, and, having dressed *Bene Trovato* in a new suit, with his Turkish fez covering his beautiful locks, brought him in and introduced him to the company. At first the boy seemed nervous, but, on looking around, he suddenly broke away from Patch and ran to Deville (who was so busily engaged that he did not notice him at first), and, clasping him around the leg, looked up in his face with a pleased expression, laughing in his silent way.

Devil started at his touch, and, looking down, was visibly affected at the sight of the boy. Recovering himself in an instant, he inquired whose beautiful little child it was.

"He shows a singular fancy for you," said Mr. Vere Saye. "He has never noticed anybody else except Miss Angeline since he has been in the house. He comes to you as if to an old acquaintance."

"No, indeed," said Deville, "I never laid eyes on the youngster before; but children are like dogs; they know by intuition those who are kind to them. Perhaps this little fellow has mixed me up with some one who was fond of him. Who is he, and where did he come from?" Then Mr. Vere Saye related the adventure of Harry Morton.

"Vile wretches!" exclaimed Deville. "No doubt they have made this poor child suffer. What a pity Morton hadn't killed some of them!"

The child looked up into Deville's face and smiled. Deville patted his head and kissed him.

Patch now came after her little charge, but he would not leave Deville, looking up into his face with his mischievous-looking smile. When Vere Saye remarked that the men were no doubt pirates, the child drew his hand across his throat and shuddered.

Finally he consented to go with Patch, after taking an affectionate leave of Deville, who remarked to Mr. Vere Saye: "A most

singular infatuation. The boy evidently connects me with some one else."

This was the one bright spot in Deville's evening. The child, whom he did not know, seemed to cling to him, while the being for whom he would have laid down his life studiously avoided him. Poor George May hadn't even Deville's consolation to cheer him up, and all Flossy's charms could not win him from his despondency. He left the house early, without having a chance to bid Louise good-night.

Louise had wandered with Conrad off the porch, and both seemed to be studying the stars. What could these two be talking of for three long hours? They could have but few feelings in common to induce such close communion. Who knows? The commander must have been a person of very fascinating powers, to have chained the attention of Louise Morton for so long a time. Certain it is that the conduct of this girl had thrown a gloom over the evening. The young people seemed joyless, and their elders, though they sat down to cards, seemed to take little pleasure in the game. Patch was furious with Louise for monopolizing Conrad, and her mother was evidently not pleased.

When the company had departed and the family had retired to their rooms for the night, Patch flung her door open and stood with arms akimbo in rather a defiant manner.

"Well!" she said to Louise, "you've gone and done it, haven't you? You've knocked all the fat into the fire and made things generally stupid. Poor George May is so miserable he'll no doubt go to the 'Lamb' and commit suicide with a hair-pin; and as for Deville, he hasn't smole a smile the whole evening. Lou, you're an impostor!"

"Patch," said Louise, "stop your impertinence. What do I care about George May or James Deville? Haven't they tongues of their own? Please be more choice in your language, or Miss Schwartz had better give place to some other teacher."

"Haven't you been coddling those two fellows up all the spring, to the exclusion of every one else?" said Patch. "Haven't you lived, moved, and had your being through those two fellows, until you got them so dead in love with you that they don't know t'other from which?"

"Why, Patch, where do you pick up your elegant expressions?"

"Never you mind the style of my expressions, Miss Morton.

You know perfectly well what I mean, and that I am after your scalp. If you don't behave better and mind what I say, I will take it off as clean as an Indian would. First, Miss Morton, stand up and hear the indictment against you. There's dear little innocent, harmless, generous George May, who wouldn't hurt a fly. He would die to serve you, yet you treat him as if he were the vilest wretch in the country. You treat him worse than a strolling vagabond; for you might be induced to give the latter a crust of bread, but you have sent George May away to-night with as sore a heart as ever poor boy had. I just wish he'd love me as he loves you, and you'd see if I wouldn't stick to him like a chestnut-bur."

"Patch, stop your nonsense!" exclaimed Louise. "What do you suppose I want with a man whom you describe as a harmless innocent? I don't want a husband such as that. He may do as a lover to while away time, but that's all. Pray now, Patch, whom do you call my first lover?"

"What would you give to know?" said Patch, looking keenly at her sister. "Don't ask me, or I may tell you something you think, perhaps, I don't know."

"I defy you," said Louise.

"Then," said Patch, "here goes, as the bull said when he pitched into the china-shop. Do you pretend to deny that Edgar Lane has been a lover of yours for two years?—that all the time you were at Boulanger's you and he were carrying on a clandestine correspondence? And can you deny that you have engaged yourself to him, in defiance of papa's injunctions?"

Patch had got thus far in her speech when Louise sprang across the floor. "Hush, Patch!" she cried, "for mercy's sake. Don't refer to that; don't breathe it to any one, or you'll ruin me."

"Then," said Patch, "you must make me your confidante in any new love-affair you may have. I do feel bad about poor George May, because he's such a love, and when I'm eighteen, if he isn't engaged or hasn't committed suicide, I shall propose to him myself. I don't care so much about Deville; he is so big and strong he wouldn't groan if he were broken on the wheel."

"He will have to break as far as I am concerned," said Louise. "Do you know, Patch, I have met my fate—a man that has a stronger will than mine, one who won't be trampled on, and with a temper nothing can quell."

"Thank God for that!" said Patch, fervently. "We may hope to have some peace in the family when you get married. But what

are you going to do with Edgar Lane? That's a serious business."

"How much do you know about it?" exclaimed Louise, coming close to Patch and gazing earnestly at her, while that dark, glittering look we have before remarked showed itself in her eyes.

"Don't try to frighten me with your volcano looks," said Patch, "for I don't mind them. But take my advice, and avoid new loves before you are off with the old. You know, my dear elder sister, that I have ten times as much sense as you have, though I'm only fifteen, and that I've furnished you with brains for several years past."

"Patch, you are the most ridiculous child I ever knew; you talk as if I wanted brains."

"Why, Louise, you remind me of an ostrich that hides his head in the sand, and, because he can't see the hunters, thinks they can't see him. You are the most transparent creature in the world, and your transparency will bring you lots of trouble. Now, I'll bet you one of my muslins against your blue cashmere that you told that navy fellow—the Eagle, I mean—the history of your life, and that of the whole family to boot."

"I did nothing of the kind," replied Louise. "The fact is, Patch, I scarcely talked at all. I listened to that man until my soul seemed to dissolve away in the midst of his descriptions of tropical scenery and desperate adventures."

"Poor soul!" laughed Patch, "it seems to dissolve early. Why, Louise, do you know that Mr. Berry Sharp, *alias* Poodle, who parts his hair in the middle, quotes Byron and Moore by the mile, talks about tall phantoms flitting through the rigging in the mid-watches of the night, shadowed by the fitful lights in the binnacle, and the memory of joys long since departed reflected boldly on the mainsail-sheet; how those he fondly cherished were seen in the glimmering rays of the twinkling stars, and how he bore his cruel cross and the accumulated woes of the mid-watch like a ring-tailed monkey on a lee cat's-head smiling at a wet swab in a typhoon; and how he sits and gazes in the mid-watches aforesaid, with looks not uttered but understood, at the tacks and sheets lying so still and saint-like hanging to the belaying-pins? I'm sure that's just what he said, and he didn't take three hours to say it in either. For my part, I think all these navy fellows are cut out on the same pattern, and get all their ideas out of the same log-book, which Poodle tells me they write up at the end of the watch; and the fellow that comes on watch spends all his spare time in reading his

predecessor's remarks. Now, Louise, I don't go crazy over Poodle ; and why need you upset things generally because the Eagle happened to flap his wings over your head ?”

“You silly child, to compare your Poodle with my Eagle ! for that's what Commander Conrad is—an eagle among the small birds. He is as much above the ordinary men around him as the eagle is above the turkey-buzzard.”

“Is that any reason,” sneered Patch, “that you should treat your friends and mine as if they were vagabonds ? There'll come along some of these days another eagle that will soar higher than your bird ; what will you say then ? I'm getting sleepy, but must enter into a treaty with you before I throw myself into the arms of omnibus ; that is, you may listen as much as you please to Conrad, give Deville a ‘nubbin’ of corn, and let George May curl himself up at your feet and tell you how much he loves you—that won't hurt you, will it ?”

“No,” said Louise, “I will agree to that.”

“I haven't done yet,” replied Patch. “I tore the skirt off my dress as I came up-stairs just now in too much of a hurry : so you must give me that light silk you never wear ; I want it for to-morrow evening.”

“Yes, yes,” said Louise ; “and you'll never breathe Edgar Lane's name ?”

“Never,” said Patch, “if you'll throw in a pair of your white satin slippers.”

“I agree,” said Louise. “Now go to bed, you troublesome child, and don't worry me any more.”

When Deville returned to the “Lamb” he found George May lying on the bed looking the picture of despair. “Cheer up, my dear boy,” said Deville. “It's only a passing fancy ; it will wear off in a week.”

“By which time,” said May, “she will break my heart. Did you ever see anything so contemptuous as Louise's manner toward us this evening, after professing that she liked us better than any one else ? And here's a fellow she never saw or heard of before, and she won't even look at us when he is near.”

“I admit her faults,” said Deville ; “but, by heavens ! she is the most beautiful creature in the world. She has wound herself so around my heart that I can not shake her off if I desired. My life is bound to be miserable owing to that girl. She is as treacher-

ous as her eyes bespeak her. As for Conrad, he is one of nature's noblemen, and is fascinated by the beauty of Louise. Who can blame him? He must live and learn. He will pledge us yet the bitter cup when the fennel-leaf is pressed for his drinking!"

"Let him drink, then," said May. "I hope the mixture will be bitter as gall to him! For my part, I shall go away and spend my life in some remote corner of the earth."

"No, no," said Deville, "not so bad as that; let us stay and take our chances. It's not my way to give up anything, much less the woman I love. Yet I would resign my claim to you, George, if it would insure your happiness."

"So would I to you, old fellow," said May; "but I don't think either of us will ever have much to say in the matter. But good-night, old fellow; let me go to sleep. There may be a gleam of sunshine to-morrow." And so they parted.

Vere Saye sat up late after his return to the "Dove," pondering over the events of the last few days. "What a splendid creature that man Deville is!" he said to himself. "What a physique! His strength must be herculean. If that man should rise in his strength, twenty men would be tossed like so many nine-pins before him. I never before met a man that I could not conquer in a personal encounter, yet I believe that Deville could handle me."

Vere Saye rolled up his shirt-sleeves and displayed an arm worthy of Hercules. "Now," said he, "there's a biceps muscle big as a thirty-two-pound ball, the triceps muscle rises on the arm as if there were a great mole under the skin, the back muscles lie together like so many whip-ends, the whole measuring twenty inches. The fore-arm is like the arms of two stalwart blacksmiths both in one, and the muscles of the arms like bars of steel. Yet I believe that man could take me down. I wonder where he got his training. What a stroke-oar he could pull!"

"What a curious fancy that child took to Deville! He acted as if he had known him before. Perhaps it was some likeness the boy may have seen to some one else. Yet once I saw him look at the child with an expression it seemed to comprehend, and then it ran away to the young lady. This must have been entirely accidental, no doubt.

"What a beautiful girl Miss Carrolton is!" he continued to himself. "She is as far superior to Louise Morton as a lily is to a cactus-flower—one all purity and freshness, the other ready to sting



you with her prickles if you go too near her. She reminds me of a female panther I once saw that nothing could tame.

"Just to think of what a lot of plunder I have in these bags! I could break into any house in the country if I were so disposed. I think I'll give this key marked 'Jakob Moses' to a friend of mine; perhaps he will make something out of it. I don't much like the looks of old Carrolton, but his daughter is beautiful." Flossy was the last thing Vere Saye thought of that night; perhaps her figure mingled in his dreams! Who knows?

Mr. Eton had been very quiet all the evening, and took very little interest in the rubber of whist formed by himself, the doctor, Mr. Slings, and Mr. Carrolton.

When he reached home, his wife said, "Well, my darling, as you came up so late I had no chance to talk to you about the robbery."

"Ah! yes, Fanny, seventy thousand dollars gone. But I think it a hoax; some one has played a joke on me, and it will all come back again in a day or two. I don't know how they got in, but they broke nothing and didn't pick any locks. That infernal placard that appeared in the papers is all a lie, and if they expect to injure the credit of Eton & Co. they are mightily mistaken. I can buy 'em all out twice over."

"Then," said Fanny, "you can afford to get me the new light carriage I want to go shopping in; it's too troublesome to go about in the big, heavy carriage of ours."

"Humph! yes," said Eton; "better use the omnibus for the present," and he went out.

"The old bear!" exclaimed Fanny. "As if I married him to ride in an omnibus! I could have done that with poor dear Fred Foster." And she took her candle and departed.

"I do think, popsy," said Flossy to her father, "that Harry Morton is the sweetest fellow that ever lived, and Mr. Vere Saye is too handsome. I don't know which I like best; they are both splendid."

"It depends, Flossy," said her father, "which of them likes you best. Young Morton will be worth a large fortune. I know nothing about the other, except that he is a stuck-up Oxford man, who wouldn't look at you in England." With this remark Carrolton retired to his room.

"Ah me," murmured Flossy, "how many difficulties there are ! There's George May dead in love with Louise Morton ; there's Deville with an attachment abroad, and devoted to Mrs. Eton here ; there's that naval captain throwing himself at Louise Morton's feet ; there's Harry Morton with a fortune, and his father a purse-proud aristocrat ; there's Mr. Berry Sharp—I wouldn't touch him with a pair of tongs ; there's that old sailing-master—bah ! and that navy doctor ; and I'm told that Mr. Vere Saye wouldn't look at me in England. I think," said Flossy, surveying herself in the glass, "he'd be glad enough to look at me if he could just see me now !"

She here extinguished the candle, and was soon wrapped in sweet slumber.

If Flossy could only have known what Vere Saye was thinking about her at that moment, she might not have slept a wink that night.

" Thus in sweet sleep our troubles glide away,  
And hearts are fresher at the break of day ;  
In dreams we reap the love we often crave,  
Though daylight sends it to an early grave."

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## CHAPTER XXIX.

### LIGHTS AND SHADOWS.

THE day after the arrival of the naval officers at Hawks' Roost was the day appointed for Mary Gale to leave home.

Any one viewing the preparations would have supposed that the young lady was bound on a long journey. It was the first real separation between Agnes and her daughter. Mary had often been away for a day or so up the Hudson, giving lessons in drawing or music ; but this parting for a week, perhaps for two weeks, almost unnerved Agnes. She wept over her daughter as if her heart would break.

"Mother," said Mary, "give up the idea of my going into the country ; it seems to distress you so."

"No, my darling," Agnes replied ; "although I am so affected, I am none the less anxious that you should keep your appointment. You will have the opportunity of making friends among the most influential people in New York, which may be of the utmost advantage to you in the future. Go, my pet, by all means, and I will

pray for you every hour. Oh, it is hard to part with you, my daughter, and I shall feel it especially at night when I miss you from my side. Then you will feel so lonesome in that great house in the country ; and what will you do in a room all by yourself ? ”

“ Don’t talk so, mother,” said Mary, “ or you will unnerve me. I am just ready to cry now. If I find that I can not stand the separation, and that you are fretting for me, I will come home and give up the situation. If the lady has any heart she will not object to my leaving.”

“ Ah, my darling ! ” said Agnes, “ she will not be willing to let you go ; she will be too anxious to retain your services when she becomes acquainted with your talents. I not only shall not blame her, but I wish you to stay with her. You will never have another opportunity of making such friends.”

At that moment Mr. Bernard entered with a letter in his hand. “ I come to show you,” he said to Agnes, “ a letter from your friend Mr. Lindsay, and I recommend you to adhere strictly to his advice. He has lately received letters making inquiries with regard to yourself and daughter—whether you are still living, your address, etc. By a careful examination he is convinced that these letters, though purporting to be from different quarters, are all written by the same hand as the one advising you to move from Manchester and change your name. A person, evidently disguised, has made many inquiries concerning you in Manchester. If he intended any good, he would have called on Mr. Lindsay after having been informed by the townspeople that that gentleman could tell him all about you. Mr. Lindsay informed his correspondent that you were living with your mother’s brother in the south of France. He heard nothing further from him until a few days ago, when a letter was received asking an interview on Boston Common. Mr. Lindsay declined the interview, but invited the writer to meet him at his office. Mr. Lindsay addressed his letter, as directed, to Mr. A. B., and contrived to be present at the post-office when the stranger called for it. Although the man was evidently disguised, he thinks he should recognize him if he ever saw him again.

“ Now,” continued Mr. Bernard, “ we can’t tell what all this means ; but forewarned is forearmed, and you must endeavor to keep out of this man’s way. Your daughter will be safer at Hawks’ Roost than in the city. The fact that Mr. Lindsay reported you as in the south of France will perhaps throw the person, whoever he is, off the track, and he may not trouble you. Miss Mary

must be careful in answering any questions relating to her former life or her family—in fact, anything that does not bear upon the business in which she is engaged. All persons have private affairs that they do not wish to discuss, and no true lady would undertake to penetrate a reserve held by one in her employ.

“And now, my child,” said the old lawyer, addressing Mary, “be prudent and make all the friends you can. You must guard against trouble when you know that it exists; but it is sometimes hard to control our tongues, and we are trapped before we know it. I will see you to the steamboat.”

Mary bade her mother farewell, and the old gentleman escorted her to the carriage he had provided. After a short ride they reached the Rip Van Winkle.

When the boat was speeding up the river, Mary felt as if her heart would break; but gradually she became more calm, and even enjoyed the beautiful scenery through which the boat was passing. A band of strolling musicians on board helped by their cheerful strains to beguile her sad thoughts; and we will leave her to pass the hours until the boat reached Catskill.

The young people at Hawks' Roost had that morning, after breakfast, assembled on the western porch. The weather was beautiful, the air crisp and bracing. Nothing could be more beautiful than Hawks' Roost, its roof peeping out from the great oaks and elms that surrounded it, with beautiful lawns and gardens stretching away to the fields, where grazed the fine cattle that supplied milk and butter to the inhabitants of the famed dwelling.

The woods were waving and shimmering with their wealth of variegated leaves, where the partridge would take his flight from under the wayfarer's feet and go sailing off through the dense thickets to some darker recess of the forest; or the woodpecker would flit from tree to tree, the busiest inhabitant of the woods; or the gray squirrel would spring along the path and watch an intruder as if he were poaching on his preserves. Ah! could they talk to us, what pleasant tales these wild denizens of the forest would tell of the pleasant trysts, the lovers' vows, the happy hours, the moonlight promenades, which they had witnessed from their eyries!

The waving leaves seemed instinct with life, while the gleams of sun and intervals of shade, caused by the fleecy clouds passing overhead, appeared like the change of a kaleidoscope, while the murmur

of the breeze suggested the presence of fairy beings peopling the solitudes.

There was one giant oak towering above the others, whose hoary head proclaimed him monarch of the woods. Centuries had passed over his head and thinned his topmost branches ; the storms of winter had torn great flakes from his bark, yet he stood proudly, as if bidding defiance to time.

A Virginia creeper had wound its way up the enormous trunk of the oak, and in process of time had nearly covered it, hanging from the lower limbs in graceful festoons. Some fish-hawks had built their nests in the topmost branches, and there they abode year after year ; there they had lived undisturbed since the memory of man. It was from their lofty abode that Mr. Morton's estate had derived its name.

It was proposed by Mrs. Morton that the young people should take their guests to the great oak, as it was but a few hundred yards from the house. Louise offered to lead the way, Commander Conrad placing himself on her right and George May on her left, the latter determined not to be driven off the field without a struggle.

"Next your heart !" whispered George as they started.

"*Toujours !*" replied Louise, gayly, and the despondency of the day before disappeared from the young man's brow as if by magic.

Everybody began wondering what had come over Louise to make her so amiable.

Commander Conrad felt that he had monopolized Louise's society the day before to an extent that good taste would hardly justify. He had been so struck with the beauty of Louise, that he had been completely carried away, and, without stopping to think whether he was trenching on another man's preserves, had devoted himself the whole evening to her.

But his companion had seemed as eager as himself to join in the flirtation, and had spared no effort to be agreeable. When he once remarked, "I hope, Miss Morton, that I am not keeping you away from your more agreeable friends," she laughed, and said :

"There is no one there in whom I am interested, and this *tête-à-tête* is like reaching an oasis in the desert and resting under the trees after crossing a parched wilderness. Our young men," she continued, "are so circumscribed in their every-day limits that their conversation is nothing but gossip. I am saturated with

accounts of Mrs. Jones's diamonds, and Mrs. Smith's little *contre-temps* with Mr. Brown, and trash of that description."

The commander, though a man of the world, and engaged in many a flirtation, was more impressed on his first evening at Hawks' Roost than he had ever been before. That night he sat at his window and smoked until the old clock on the stairs, which Mrs. Morton firmly believed came over in the Mayflower, struck the hour of ten in tones loud enough to scare a dozen burglars out of the house.

"What nonsense!" said Conrad, as he made preparations for retiring. "I shall be here but a few days. Salt water will wash it all out; let me enjoy myself while I may."

With the usual vanity of his sex, Conrad thought he had made a deep impression on this young girl, so entirely unsophisticated, not knowing that Louise was a graduate of Madame Faucet's celebrated finishing-school, warranted to eradicate all innocence and purity from its accomplished pupils.

This being Commander Conrad's state of mind, he was a little surprised at Louise's coquetry with George May, who was suddenly raised to the seventh heaven, while the self-love of the nautical gentleman was considerably diminished. He found he was about to engage a battery carrying heavier guns than he had supposed. "How could she," said he to himself, "tell me that my conversation was like an oasis in the desert after talking to city men, and then turn around and shower all her attentions on this young sprat, who looks too much like a girl to be a man?" So the commander, feeling rather foolish, dropped behind and joined Miss Flossy.

"Louise," said George May, after they were a little in advance, "you are yourself to-day. Last night you made me perfectly miserable. I never closed my eyes all night."

"I?" said Louise. "Why, for mercy's sake, what did I do?"

"Didn't you," said George, "ignore every one in the house, myself in particular, and devote yourself exclusively to Commander Conrad, whom you never saw before?"

"Well, George," she replied, "if you are not the most innocent young man I ever met with! As if a young lady could do anything else but show attention to her brother's friends!"

"Ah!" said George, "but you selected this particular one to receive all your attentions. Deville and myself were left out in the cold."

"Let Deville speak for himself, George," interposed Louise.

"I don't believe he thought anything about it. Nobody thinks anything of a flirtation with naval officers. They have a sweetheart in every port—at least so I am told. Besides, to tell you a secret, Commander Conrad is a prig, and I was glad to run away with you and hear something original."

"Why, Louise," said May, "I thought Commander Conrad a very agreeable person. This morning before breakfast he quite won our hearts by his witty conversation and general intelligence. Then he is a handsome man besides. If he were only a prig I shouldn't mind him."

"If he is all you say," said Louise, "I must begin to observe him a little closer. He is rather good-looking, I admit; but then there are other handsome men here, if that's all that's required."

"Yes, Deville, for instance—the handsomest man I ever saw, and who has qualities of heart that no other man of my acquaintance possesses."

"Really, George, you ought to marry Deville, and be done with it."

They had now arrived at the giant oak, somewhat in advance of the rest of the party. A path led from the oak into the depths of the wood. "Let us walk on, Louise," said George. "I have something to say to you." And they strolled on.

When they had shut out the sight of the others, May turned toward Louise, and said, "You asked me just now why I didn't marry Deville. The reason is, I live in the hope of marrying you, for on that event all my hopes of happiness depend."

"You foolish boy!" laughed Louise. "What nonsense you talk! Why, I am old enough to be your mother."

"You were eighteen eleven months ago, and I am twenty-four."

"But I love you dearly as a brother, and that's the sweetest feeling in the world."

"I don't want to be loved as a brother, Louise," said George. "I want you for my wife—to devote all my life and soul to you, and to die for you if necessary."

"That would be stupid, George. I don't want anything of the kind. I want you and Deville to devote yourselves to me all my life."

"But, Louise, you know that you have given me hopes that after you have had your fling you would be my wife. You have always said you loved me as a brother."

"Oh, dear George!" she said, "that leads to no goal that ever

I heard of. Once a brother, always a brother. If a girl commences that way with a man, she will never marry him. Now, come, dear George, don't mar your happiness by thinking of such a thing. Let your attentions rest on pretty Miss Carrolton. I thought her like a milk-maid at first, but now I see a great deal in her."

"Let her speak for herself," said May. "I want none of her. Louise, you will drive me to despair!"

"What am I to do, between you and Deville? He tells me he loves the very ground I tread upon, yet he says you are the one most worthy of my love. You say you love me to distraction, yet Deville is the noblest man alive."

"So he is, and he is the only one I would be willing to see obtain your hand."

"I suppose, sir," said Louise, rather haughtily, "when it comes to the point you will toss up a copper for the honor of my hand. No, thank you! The man who marries me must be unwilling to yield me to any one else under any circumstances. That's not the love-making I want, George; you have spoken too soon."

"It was time to speak decidedly when I saw you apparently so taken with a stranger. What was I to think?"

"Think what you please," she answered, "but don't insinuate that I know so little of the world, and am so unmaidenly, that I was infatuated with the first good-looking man that came to the house. Now, George, I think we have had enough of this. You must not repeat it, or I shall get angry."

"Is it a crime to love you and to tell you so?" said George. "Ah! Louise, don't turn away angry. Remember, you are pronouncing the verdict that is to make me the happiest or else the most miserable of men. I could not live and see you the bride of another."

"Not even of Deville?" retorted Louise, with a sneer. "After you had tossed up a copper for the possession of my hand, would you not comply with your agreement? But come, George, let us end this, for I have no more idea of marrying you than I have of flying. I shall not marry until I have trampled at least a dozen men under my feet, for that is a woman's privilege."

"You might trample me to death," said George, "and I should be a willing sacrifice. But tell me, I pray you, is there any one who stands in my way? There must be some reason why you can not return my devotion."

She looked at him with eyes of steel. "You ask me if any one



stands in *your* way. I tell you, yes, there is, and in my way too, and may God grant—" She stopped suddenly, and, turning, ran to the old oak, where the party seemed to be enjoying themselves to the top of their bent. A flight of steps led to a platform in the fork of the oak, whereon were seated Miss Carrolton, crowned with flowers as queen of the forest, with Commander Conrad at her side as the king.

This spectacle didn't add to Louise's good humor. She gazed at the pair in rather a cynical manner, and then walked toward the house. George May stood where Louise had left him, almost petrified with astonishment. He saw at last that there was no hope for him. Louise had treated him as if he were a mere boy, yet he had been fool enough to think she might in time consent to marry him. But to-day he saw Louise as he had never before beheld her. As she spoke those enigmatical words and turned on him her fathomless eyes, and then fled away, he saw that she was gone from him forever. He threw himself upon the mossy ground with all the abandon of youthful passion. How could he live without this woman? Better die at once and end his misery.

Yet what was this that stood in his way, and in her way too? What could she mean?

Ah! he had it now. She had deceived him, and had given her heart to Conrad. Poor Deville! his turn would come next, and half his own pain disappeared in the pity he felt for his friend.

With these thoughts and feelings May passed through the woods to the high-road, and thence pursued his way to the "Lamb" tavern, where he gave himself up to gloomy thoughts in the retirement of his room.

Every one at the oak had noticed Louise come out of the woods and then depart toward the house. Those who knew her moods thought nothing of it, but all wondered what had become of George May.

"How could she," said Flossy to Mrs. Eton, "have the heart to refuse him? I feel so sorry for Mr. May. You told me he was sure of her."

"No one can be sure of Louise Morton," said Mrs. Eton, "any more than one can be sure of drawing a prize in a lottery, or being struck by lightning. But, Flossy, we must secure Mr. May for our set; he is lovely at a breakfast-table, and for selecting shades of silk or worsted he hasn't an equal."

"Yes," said Flossy, "Miss Morton will regret her conduct."

"She's after Captain Conrad now," said Mrs. Eton ; " this is only preparatory to hooking *him*."

Patch, of course, had noticed the whole affair, for there was nothing that could escape her ; and, as soon as she reached home, with her dress in a rather dilapidated condition from climbing about the oak-tree, she repaired forthwith to Louise's room, and found her sister gazing blankly out of the window.

" What *have* you been doing to George May, Louise ? " said she.

" Rejecting him, miss, if you must know ; and now I advise you to change your dress and try and look respectable."

" Reject George May ! " exclaimed Patch, " after you have been coddling him for the past six months, and making believe you only lived in the light of his eyes. How could you reject him after papa and mamma have expressed themselves so pleased with the match ? "

" Don't talk nonsense, Patch," said her sister. " I'm not in the humor for it. Would you marry a man that you didn't love ? "

" Not by a jugfull," said Patch, with emphasis.

" And if you should happen to love another ? "

" The wind sits in that quarter, does it ? And how long, pray, have you been affected, Louise, and what remedies have you tried ? A bottle of whisky will generally cure a man, unless the attack is very serious. But, Louise, have you no regret at bowling a man over so unceremoniously ? "

" Why," replied Louise, " that's all men are fit for. What can you do with the best of them but reject them ? You can not marry them all, that's certain. And while one man holds on and fights shy to see how the others fare, you may have to reject a dozen before you get the right one."

" That's it," said Patch. " Throw away a dozen straight sticks and take up with a crooked one at last."

" The whole business," said Louise, " is nothing but a lottery, where a prize is hardly ever drawn. But don't talk to me any more of George May ; I don't intend to have him and Deville dangling after me any more ; it hurts a girl to have too many lovers at one time."

" Does it ? " said Patch. " Well, I'd like to try the experiment when I get to be nineteen, with my eye-teeth cut. So you intend to shuffle off Mr. Deville, just as you did poor George May ? "

" Exactly."

" You don't take into account," said Patch, " how those two

fellows will make night hideous at the 'Lamb' with their groans and sighs, and in comparing notes with each other."

"I don't intend to take anything into account," said Louise.

"They may groan themselves sick if they choose."

"And you'll trample on their hearts, will you?"

"That will I," said Louise. "What would one of the creatures care if he trampled on a woman's heart? Many of them do it after marriage—often the very ones that are most obsequious beforehand. No, I believe it's the mission of some women to pay back to men the wrongs they have inflicted on our sex. So, no more of May and Deville, if you love me."

"You have another lover?" said Patch. "You've found your fate at last—the man for whom you have been looking to paddle down the stream of life with, *et cetera, et cetera*? How about Edgar?"

"Don't mention that name, Patch; it's the bane of my life. I can not sleep without seeing those large dark eyes looking reproachfully at me. I was so mean as to tell mamma not to invite him to dinner yesterday. Well, if the worst comes to the worst, I'll bowl him down with the rest. Why should I consider Edgar Lane? Talk of childhood's affection—what nonsense! Better talk of childhood's deception, and how boys of sixteen begin to deceive and involve one in difficulty. Of all things in the world, save a girl from boy lovers—lock her up in a convent, send her to the Antipodes—anything to get rid of a boy lover, who has no honor, no shame, no responsibility."

"What in the name of heaven are you talking about?" interposed Patch. "Your mumbling reminds me of the witches in Macbeth—

"'Bubble, bubble, toil and trouble.'"

"What I mean to say, Patch," resumed Louise, "is simply this: I have met my fate—he has come. My hands are tied, and I intend to trample under foot every obstacle in my way; and if these men whom you have mentioned see fit to throw themselves beneath the car of Juggernaut, they will be crushed, that's all."

"Amen!" said Patch, "and may you be a good little girl and teach a Sunday-school." And Patch departed in search of her little charge, *Bene Trovato*, whom she found at Deville's side, gazing earnestly in that gentleman's face.

That evening there was to be a dance at the villa. Some of the neighbors had been invited, musicians were engaged, and all neces-

sary preparations made by the housekeeper for a grand supper as part of the entertainment. The ladies were all busy in preparing their dresses, and the gentlemen were left to themselves to get through the remaining hours of daylight as best suited them.

Patch, as usual, had to borrow one of Louise's white muslin dresses, with which she declared she would "make Mr. Berry Sharp, *alias* 'Poodle,' look white under the gills before the evening was over." And she looked so pretty after she was "all ataunto," as her nautical admirer expressed it, as "to set all the men's heads whirling."

Dinner took place an hour earlier than usual that day. Louise was handed in by Commander Conrad. May and Deville were both there; but neither interfered with the commander, who had Miss Morton all to himself, and, judging from appearances, the two were mutually pleased with each other.

Before dinner, thoughtful Harry had remarked to his mother, "Darling mamma, have you forgotten that the venerable Miss Samson and her handbox will arrive to-day? Do you think it would be overstretching politeness for me to take the carriage and escort the amiable spinster up from the steamboat-landing, instead of having her come in the wagon with the trunks? As she is to be a companion to your daughters, I think it would be well to show her this much consideration."

"Take the best carriage, my dear Harry, with the footman," replied Mrs. Morton. "It is always well to impress dependents with a sense of their inferiority; they will respect you the more. If this person shouldn't happen to suit, and should return home very shortly, she will feel better satisfied at having been treated with consideration. Politeness is cheap, and I would save people in the lower walks of life as much humiliation as possible. Persons of this class are very troublesome; they generally haven't sense enough outside their professional accomplishments to keep their heads out of the fire. Yet one can not do without them with a girl of Angeline's age, and Louise requiring some one to perfect her in French, of which really, in spite of Mme. Boulanger, she knows absolutely nothing. But, Harry, won't the girls laugh when they see you riding up with the old maid?"

"But, mother, suppose she happens to be a buxom beauty instead of an old maid?"

"So much the worse," said Mrs. Morton; "buxom and vulgar go together. But order the carriage, for you won't have more than time to reach the boat." So Harry departed on his mission.

The Rip Van Winkle was just coming to the wharf as Harry drove up. He alighted, and went toward the boat to see if he could see the spinster whom he was to escort to Hawks' Roost.

The plank was put out, and a young lady with veil down tripped ashore, while a small trunk, marked Mary Samson, and a small hand-bag without name, were passed on shore. The lady who landed was the only one present, and, as the plank was being hauled in, he looked in vain for the expected spinster. There was her trunk—where was she? No doubt the old lady had fallen asleep and been carried by. But who was the young lady stranger, who had walked to the passenger-house and sat down on one of the chairs at the door? That beautiful figure could not be the old maid he was looking for, and that neat-fitting dress, elegantly made, was certainly the dress of a perfect lady.

As he approached there seemed something familiar in the proud little head, set so beautifully on her shoulders. His heart gave one jump, and it seemed almost as if it had left his body to meet the person of all others on earth he wished to see.

When he was within five feet of her she raised her thick veil, and he stood petrified with joy. He showed it in the most unmistakable manner.

"Miss Gale!" he exclaimed, "this is an unexpected pleasure."

"Let me correct you, sir," she said. "When I had the pleasure of thanking you on our last meeting for the assistance you rendered me, you addressed me as Miss Gale, without my giving you any warrant for doing so. Supposing that we should not meet again, I did not think it necessary to undeceive you when you called me Miss Gale; for, if you will consider a moment, you were scarcely authorized to address me by any name unless I had told you what my name is. My name is not Gale."

"Excuse me," he replied, the blood mounting to his face, "but I am in search of a person whom I am to take to Hawks' Roost—a Miss Samson, who has no doubt been carried by. I beg you a thousand pardons for my intrusion and apparent rudeness, and take my leave."

"I am Miss Samson," she quietly answered, "and I was waiting until I could get the wharfman to attend to me."

"You!" exclaimed Harry, his face suffused with delight. "Then I am to have the honor of escorting you to Hawks' Roost. My name is Harry Morton, the son of the house."

She bowed merely, not intending that the young gentleman

should make her talk more than was necessary. She beckoned to the wharfman, and, when he came, she said, "Send these things to Hawks' Roost. Now, sir," addressing Harry, "I am at your service."

He had been so bewildered with joy at finding Miss Samson in the person of this beautiful girl that he was almost tongue-tied, and he handed her into the carriage without any remark, only insisting that the small trunk and hand-bag should be put up with the coachman. Then he got in by her side, and the carriage drove off.

"Mr. Morton," she said, as soon as they started, "I committed a great indiscretion when I last saw you. I should have told you my name, and who I was, and I fear that this will lead to some complications, especially as you may have mentioned the accident that happened to me, and the name you thought proper to assume for me."

"I regret to say I did mention the matter, and the name I supposed was yours."

"In that case, Mr. Morton, can I depend upon your honor never to mention that you have met Miss Samson before? It might have the appearance of my traveling under two names, and I don't want to be obliged to make explanations on my first entrance into a family, if they retain me."

"Retain you!" said Harry; "why, they will never part with you."

"Perhaps," she said; "but can I depend upon your honor never to refer to the past in any way, and to know me simply as Miss Samson?"

"With all my heart," said Harry, who was delighted to have a secret with this beautiful creature. "There was some discussion," said he, "with regard to your name, which may make it desirable to have nothing said about it. I shall never refer to the matter in any way, and shall forget that I was so indiscreet as to address you by any name until I had your permission to do so."

"Thank you, sir," said Mary, and fell back into the carriage, where she relapsed into silence. Several times he drew her attention to some attractive point or object, and asked her if she did not think it pretty. She only answered, "Yes, very pretty."

When they arrived at the villa-door, the young lady was handed out, and shown into the reception-room by a servant in livery. The surroundings told her that this was the abode of wealth, refinement, and luxury.

"I will inform my mother that Miss Samson is here, if you will permit," said Harry. She bowed her head, and he departed on his errand.

Under the calm exterior of this young girl no one could imagine what conflicting emotions reigned within her bosom. Had she for one moment supposed that she was to meet the young gentleman who knew her as Miss Gale, she would have turned back home to her mother. She did not remember the young man's name after it was spoken by Dr. Preston, and what was her surprise when she saw the same person approach her as if in search of some one, whom she imagined to be herself.

In one instant her clear mind grasped the situation, and she saw there was but one thing to be done—to avoid having the name of Gale run the risk of being mentioned, for reasons given by Mr. Lindsay. The only way of bringing this about was to place young Morton on his honor, for Mary felt confident, from his appearance and his profession, that he would never refer to it again.

But what must he think of her asking him not to mention the name of Gale again? Though she did not know that the name had any significance, and Harry could not help connecting the name of Gale with that galvanic shock, which went through his father and mother, and even through Mr. Vere Saye, at the mention of it. This young person looked too pure and good to have any concealment or reason for one. It was all, without doubt, his own blunder, he thought, and, at all events, it was none of his business.

With these thoughts in his mind, he went to seek his mother. He determined simply to announce Miss Samson's arrival, and let his mother take her own measures to provide for her.

When he entered the room, the family had finished the first course. "Mother," he said, "the lady you expected has arrived."

"And what did you think of the spinster, Harry?" asked Patch.

"I have seen worse-looking people in my life," replied Harry, while he wondered in his mind what his family would think of the beautiful creature, when she should burst upon them in all her loveliness.

"What did she talk about coming up?" asked Patch.

"She didn't talk," replied Harry. "I addressed one or two remarks to her, but she seems to be deaf; and she wears green goggles."

"Horrid!" they all cried, in chorus.

"Is she tall or short?" queried Patch.

"Both," said Harry; "very tall when she sits down, but very short when she stands up."

"What's the color of her hair?" asked Mr. Berry Sharp; "that's what the passengers bet on in the packets when a pilot comes on board."

"I can't say as she has any of her own," replied Harry. "I saw two or three stray bights hanging down over her forehead, and it looked decidedly red."

"What about her teeth?" asked Patch; "has she any?"

"A full new set from the dentist's," said Harry; "two of them plugged, on purpose to make people believe they are genuine."

"She must be a beauty!" laughed Patch.

"She is," said Harry, "and no mistake. She'll take the rag off any bush here. I'll take another piece of roast-beef. I'm awful hungry after the ride, and in the meanwhile the poor girl probably hasn't had anything to eat since breakfast-time. In fact, I think I heard her say to herself that she would return in the down boat."

"Thank heaven for that!" responded Patch.

"I will go and attend to this person myself," said Mrs. Morton, "if you will all excuse me. Go on and enjoy yourselves. Don't mind me. I have dined."

"Make up your mind to a great disappointment, *ma mère*," said Harry, "and tell me your private opinions."

"I shall never, I fear, be suited. I have been looking for a competent person for a year, and never found one yet," said Mrs. Morton, and she went out with a resigned air.

When Mrs. Morton entered the reception-room it was a little obscure, after coming from the parlor. Mary was standing over a center-table, looking at some prints, and straightened herself up when she heard the door open.

To describe Mrs. Morton's astonishment, at the beautiful vision that burst upon her sight, would be impossible. She had put on something of the dignity she often assumed when going to meet a disagreeable person, but now she stood still and stared with fixed eyes, as if she had seen a ghost.

The color left her face, and she trembled like one with a chill. She seemed apparently unable to move, and the young lady stood silently looking at her. Both seemed mutually surprised. At last Mary moved toward the lady of the house, as she supposed she was



in duty bound to do, and said, in a gentle voice, "I am Mary Samson, the young person you expected."

"You," she said, "Mary Samson?" and, seizing her by the hand, continued, "I expected quite a different person. Ah! has the dead come to life again, or is this the soul of the lost one returned beautified and glorified from the realms of bliss?" She paused, and gazed on the girl inquiringly.

"I hope, madam," said Mary, "I do not revive any disagreeable recollections of any one. Had I not better wait until you are better able to see me?"

"Disagreeable recollections!" murmured Mrs. Morton, absently. "No, child, no. On the contrary, you revive recollections of many years ago, when I loved one not so fair as you, but she had your eyes and hair, while the general likeness is very striking. But it is only a dream I have been indulging in. She has long since moldered to the dust; and, oh! the horrid death she died—burnt up in her own house with her child!"

"My dear madam," said Mary, "I would save you from pain by causing these reminiscences. Had I not better go away as I came? I shall always be before your eyes, causing you discomfort, and I shall consider it no inconvenience to be obliged to return by the evening boat."

"No, child," replied Mrs. Morton, holding her hand, "your presence is a joy to me, for it has been years since I have had anything to remind me of her. But, Miss Samson, you are very young to perform the duties you have assumed."

"Competency, madam, was the object you aimed to procure rather than years, and I am pronounced competent by all my masters."

"Have you a mother living, Miss Samson?"

"Yes, madam," replied Mary, "and she has been my principal instructress in all things. She is a teacher herself."

"But you are famishing."

"No, madam, I dined at four o'clock on board the steamer."

"But you are tired with your long day's journey, and must take some rest."

"I am neither tired nor hungry, Mrs. Morton," said Mary; "I am very strong."

"Then, child, tell me something of yourself; I long to know more of you."

"I have nothing to tell, madam, that would interest you," re-

plied Mary. "Perhaps I could amuse you by showing you my drawings," and she opened her hand-bag and took out the picture of "Expectation" and laid it on the table.

"Did you paint that?" asked Mrs. Morton, surprised. "If you did, the execution far excels anything of the kind I ever saw before, from the hand of any one not a professional."

"That is my picture of 'Expectation,'" said Mary. "It represents a ship just returned from a long voyage, and, taking a pilot, soon hopes to be in port. I intend to paint a companion-picture to it, to be called 'Disappointment.' That will represent the vessel enveloped in a fog and wrecked on the coast of New Jersey. It is a type of life, full of hopes and disappointments."

"What wonderful talents you have!" said Mrs. Morton. "Would you mind playing for me on the piano?"

"Not at all, madam," said Mary. "I shall take pleasure in doing so." She threw back the lid of the piano and played off, without notes, the principal parts of a difficult opera.

All but Mrs. Morton were still at dinner when the music struck their ears. "Mamma's taking the old lady through her paces," Patch said. "She is going to know what she can do on the piano."

"She ought to do well," remarked Harry; "she has fingers as long as the main-top bow-line, and with as much beam in her hand as a cat-boat, and if she can't cover the keys no one can."

"Horrid!" exclaimed Louise. "Why does mamma waste time on her? Why doesn't she give her her *congé*? I shall not take lessons from her."

But, hush! What delicious sounds! The dining-room door leading to the great hall is open, and rich and melodious airs, played by a master-hand, are floating through the rooms, and filling every niche and corner with a distinctness indescribable. There seemed to be a dozen musicians playing on the piano, and the piece ended with a grand chorus in which almost every musical instrument seemed to be represented.

"If that is not music," said Commander Conrad, "I never heard music. I have heard the best operas played at the San Carlo, at Naples, and I never heard anything finer than that."

There was a perfect silence throughout the room. Not a word was spoken, as if they were expecting more; but that was all.

"Pity she is not nice," said Louise. "I like her touch. Mamma seems interested."

Harry's eyes were full of mischief, and Patch noticed him al-

most suffocating himself trying to restrain his merriment. She looked at him keenly, and then, seizing *Bene Trovato* by the hand, dragged him from the room.

Patch approached the reception-room cautiously, and peeped in, when she saw a person sitting with her back to the door talking to her mother. She crept in, until her mother happened to see her.

"Come here, Angeline," said Mrs. Morton, "and let me introduce you to Miss Samson. My youngest daughter, Miss Samson." As Mary turned and revealed her face, Patch was transfixed to the floor. Her eyes dilated, and one foot was advanced as if she had been surprised when about making a spring.

"What does this mean, mamma?" she exclaimed. "Who is this lovely girl?" The little boy here ran forward, smiling, and, catching Mary by the hands, looked up into her eyes with his most pleased expression.

"Tell me," said Patch, kneeling down by the side of Mary, "was that you playing, or was it the angels? Mamma," turning to her mother, "I'll tell you who this is: it is Louise mellowed down into all that is beautiful and refined."

"You should not pay such compliments, Miss Angeline," said Mary; "it does not suit me, and I am not used to them. You will soon spoil me, and it is not worth while spoiling a girl whose mother has been doing everything all her life to make her a good, common-sense person."

Mrs. Morton sat looking at Mary, while the tears welled up in her own eyes. The girl brought back remembrances of her own early youth, which she could not keep back if she would. She had seen that face somewhere before—perhaps in her dreams—and she felt as if she could take the stranger to her heart and keep her there forever.

Patch was absolutely fascinated with Mary, and sat by her side clasping her hand; while *Bene Trovato*, who had mounted on her lap, was kissing the beautiful ringlets hanging down from behind her ears.

Mary looked perfectly happy. How differently the day had ended from what she expected? Instead of a dependent, she found herself received in the most affectionate terms. A perfect lady was at the head of this establishment, and Mary felt sure that she should be a companion to her pupils, not only in name, but in reality.

Patch took no end of delight in looking over the sketches. She

was charmed with the picture "Expectation." There was one little sketch in sepia that was admirable. It was the picture of a little boy, about four years old, who had run away from his mother and had gone to a small mountain rivulet to bathe. He had taken all his clothes off but his shoes and stockings, and the picture represented him in this predicament, which he knew not how to overcome, while his mother stood laughing and watching him from behind a tree at the head of the rivulet. It was a beautiful sketch, and of great force of character.

There was another sketch of a Newfoundland dog standing over a lambkin, with the mother on the point of flying from a fierce wolf that faced the dog and seemed on the point of attacking him. There was a great deal of character in this picture—the dog representing an animal of the noblest kind, while the wolf represented, in appearance, a mean, shrinking scoundrel. The motto underneath the picture was, "The noble always protect the weak."

"Are these pictures original with you, my dear?" asked Mrs. Morton.

"Yes, madam," replied Mary, "altogether. And I have many more in my trunk."

"Make up your mind," said Patch, "that I shall love you better than anything in the world. We shall be chummies, and I'll let you have *Bene Trovato* as much as you like." And she put her arms impulsively around Mary's neck and kissed her.

"Now," said Mrs. Morton, "take Miss Samson to her room and let her refresh herself. The blue room, Angeline, next to yours; and remember, dear, not to annoy Miss Samson with too much of your attention." So off they went, Patch holding one hand, and *Bene Trovato* the other.

When Mrs. Morton returned to the dining-room, Harry said, "Well, mother, what do you think of the spinster?"

"How could you, Harry, libel such a creature by calling her a spinster? She is the most lovely being I ever laid my eyes on, and so full of talent! Her music you have heard; her water-colors are perfect."

"Most lovely, mamma, did you say?" interposed Louise. "Is not that rather a superlative expression to apply to a music-teacher? I can associate nothing lovely with that class of people. I hope she will remember that she comes here to teach, and that if she is asked to play she will feel it a duty as well as a pleasure."

"Whatever she may think," said Mrs. Morton, "I shall see

that she shall do nothing that is not compatible with the position of a perfect lady, which she is. She has so stirred my heart this night, by bringing back to my memory some associations of early youth, that I am rather unnerved, and not fit company for you young people until I take some repose. You will see Miss Samson, gentlemen, this evening at the party, for I intend that she shall take her position in our family the moment she enters it."

Louise knew what her mother meant when she issued her edicts, but that did not prevent her from making up her mind to hate Mary Samson with a holy hatred, and to annoy her in every conceivable way.

When Mrs. Morton left the room, the gentlemen gathered around Harry, and all commenced inquiring about the new comer. "What is she like?" asked Vere Saye.

"Like all that you ever imagined beautiful and lovable," replied Harry; "and she seems to possess all the virtues, for my mother is not one to take up lightly with any stranger. You may depend upon it that she has carefully examined into this lady's qualifications, and that they are of the first order. Who she is or what she is I do not know, but she is apparently the most thoroughbred, beautiful woman I ever met, and she can not yet be twenty years of age."

When Harry commenced eulogizing the stranger, Louise rose impatiently. "If we are to be entertained with the virtues of our dependents," she said, "I prefer the Hawks' Throne; and if Commander Conrad is ready for a walk, I shall be happy if he will accompany me."

She might have had three or four attendants, but her preference had been so plainly shown, that no one cared to intrude. Deville and George May had not approached her for nearly two days. They seemed to have made common cause against her.

There was a pair of large, dark, hungry-looking eyes that followed her unseen night and day, either from his window, where he could see what was going on, or from the thick covert of the woods, where he could see who came into the woods. This was Edgar Lane, the poor dependent secretary, who had not been seen much of late about the premises.

After the arrival of the naval officers, Edgar Lane could not get a hearing. If he were going to the city, and called to ascertain Louise's orders, she had none to give. Formerly she not only had commissions to execute, but would accompany Edgar Lane down

to the landing, and stop and wave her handkerchief as the boat moved off ; but now there was a great change.

The unhappy young man wandered listlessly about the grounds, apparently without any object in life. These last three or four days had been an eternity to him. He had been an obedient slave and worshiper for over two years, and now there was a barrier between him and Louise which he was forbidden to pass. He had already passed that barrier in daring to lift his eyes to his patron's daughter—a patron who, if he dreamed of such a thing, would have trampled on him as if he were a common flower of the field.

Even if his patron knew that the canker-worm of love was eating away his heart, he would expect him to sit and work, day after day, with hunger gnawing at his vitals—the hunger of love—and with the rich, tempting fruit hanging within reach, and he not daring to put his hand out and grasp it. Not even so much ; he must not venture to look at it. A cat might look at a king, but he must no more raise his eyes in adoration to Louise Morton than attempt to fly.

So thought Mr. Morton, who allowed the most unrestricted freedom between his secretary and his daughter, because he thought her so far above him that he would never dare raise his eyes to that altitude.

Even should he see anything of the kind going on, he would interpose no obstacle until the time came for the delinquent to be called to task. Then Mr. Morton would send for him, and, with all the most exquisite refinement of cruelty, he would proceed to “trample him out”—to use his own favorite expression. He was like some of the old tyrannical kings, who spared not even a relative to the fifth degree. He would leave no stone unturned in carrying out his trampling process, to punish any dependent that looked up to the height of one of the house of Morton.

He had friends in other banks. A single innuendo would be enough to deprive a young man of his character in a bank, without laying one's self open to the charge of libel. “You have, I see, discharged your chief clerk,” says Mr. Jones to Mr. Perkins ; “a great loss to you, that.” “Yes, so it is,” says Perkins ; “but it might prove a greater loss if I kept him,” and, putting his finger to the side of his nose, walks off. Who can say that Mr. Perkins has maligned his secretary ? But, nevertheless, he can obtain no employment. Every one who is intimate with the secretary gives him the cold shoulder, and in a short time he is found strung up in a

closet. Perkins was not to blame. He had nothing to do with it. Oh, no ! not he ! He only spoke his vile words of slander, which prevented all employment for a poor secretary, who had not enough money to bury himself with.

Mr. Morton would do worse than this when the time came to put his vengeance into execution, if ever he had occasion to do so. He had always stored away some surprise for those who served him badly. He would put temptation in the way of an employee, and if he should fall by having too much money placed at his disposal, Mr. Morton would not mete out immediate punishment to him. He would keep him for his own purposes until the time came either to use him or "trample him out."

The last two years of Edgar Lane's life had been years of fear and misery. In spite of all edicts, he had dared to raise his eyes to his patron's daughter ; and she, with the thoughtlessness of a young girl, had listened to the love-talk of a youth but six years older than herself—she fourteen and he twenty.

It amused her to have a clandestine affair with a forbidden object. The fact that it was a forbidden object only added zest to it. She was as much in love with him the week after he opened his heart to her as she ever was. Hers was not a love that grew. It was like a vine constantly cut down, that would throw out its feelers and cling to the first object it met, without knowing or caring whether it was worthy or not. She would cling only so long as it suited her to do so. If a projecting wall or a trellis offered itself, this vagrant vine would shoot off in search of other adventures.

Louise had seen the poor, hollow-cheeked fellow within the last three days—since she had devoted herself to Commander Conrad—wandering listlessly about the grounds, trying to obtain speech of her, but she did not even look at him. It had been revealed to her, as she expressed herself to Patch, that she had met her fate ; and, like most people under such circumstances, she began to hate the one she was about to wrong. She conceived the idea that he had inflicted a great injury upon her by lifting his eyes to her, and worked herself into the thought that he had degraded her by coming into such close communion with her.

He was sitting in the garden, in one of the grottoes, when she came out with Commander Conrad, and led the way to the Hawks' Throne—that old trysting-place which had witnessed the meeting of lovers for over four centuries, and where, no doubt, the Indian war-

rior wooed the Indian maid to his wigwam, with words as loving and language as poetic as that of most modern lovers !

The tears rose to Lane's eyes as he saw them pass on—she leaning confidently on Conrad's arm, and he pouring into her ear that beautiful language of the heart which women so love to hear.

Hours passed, and still Edgar Lane watched for their return ; yet it was not until just before the clock struck nine—after the hour to dress for the ball—that Conrad and Louise returned toward the house, quiet and subdued, as if some great happiness had been poured into their lives.

“And it is only a little over two days,” said Lane, “since she first knew this man, while she has known me so long.”

He did not go to the party, though Mrs. Merton had invited him. He wandered away down to the river-bank, by the old oak path which led to the landing. He stopped there for a moment. He saw a white handkerchief lying on the ground. “It is hers,” he said, and picked it up and placed it next his heart. “There I will wear it,” he said, “till I die ! Louise ! Louise !” he exclaimed tearfully, “may you never live to repent what you are doing !”

As Louise reached the villa, she bade her companion a soft *au revoir*, and slipped through the small gate at the back of the house which led to the wing where she lodged. She found George May sitting alone on the porch smoking a cigar. He threw it away on perceiving her, and approached her.

“Dear Louise,” he said, “I want one word with you. I am mortified and humiliated to death. You seemed to scorn me to-day as if I were something unworthy of your love. Tell me only that you do not scorn me !”

“No, dear George,” said Louise. “Why should I scorn you ? A great deal of my happiness has been linked with you. If you knew, you would not blame me. I shall always love you as a brother ; what more would you ?”

“Tell me one thing,” he said—“I do not wish to rest under the impression that I am considered presumptuous in aspiring to your hand ; you spoke so contemptuously to me ; you insinuated that you were not free : would you deem me a worthy suitor if you were free and untrammelled ?”

“O God of mercy !” she exclaimed passionately, “yes ; I would welcome you as an angel of light !” And she pushed by him and rushed up-stairs.



"Thank heaven for that!" said the poor fellow. "She does not despise me! I was too abrupt in my wooing. She is not ready to give up her liberty; it is too much to ask from her. I may win her yet. Ah! and then I shall break my poor Deville's heart. She says she is not free," he continued. "Can it be that she is engaged to Deville? No, no, no! he would never keep a secret from me. Yet they say there is no such thing as honesty in love; and why not? I would be loyal to him until death, and would hand her over to him, if she loved him, if it broke my heart the next moment. But she does not despise me, and that is an atom of happiness just now." Then, musing, he went toward the "Lamb."

When Louise came into her room, she found her mother arranging her dress for the evening. "Louise," said she, "have you any desire to see and become acquainted with the new member of our household? It strikes me it would be well for you to know her before going into the ball-room, that you may be able to introduce her to the guests. She has consented to be present."

"Consented to be present, mamma!" exclaimed Louise in an excited voice. "Has the house of Morton come to that strait that a music-teacher *consents* to present herself where the best people in New York would beg admission? No, mamma, I take no interest in this twanger of instruments and dauber in water-colors, and I think an unnecessary amount of fuss has been made about her."

"But, Louise," said her mother, "this is a lady—a patrician by birth, I am sure."

"Is she, like papa's patricians, covered with gold-leaf?" asked Louise. "If not, what business has she here except in her position as French and German teacher and instructor in drawing and music? Mamma, don't you think the Mortons are getting a little low in their ideas? For my part, as I grow older my ideas grow more exalted."

"Yes," said her mother, "but your ideas are not so exalted as to prevent you from wounding the mother who has watched over you through years of infancy, and did hope to receive some reward when you arrived at the age of reason."

"Yes, mamma; but will you tell me at what age reason comes?"

"It comes," said Mrs. Morton, "with some people when they are old enough to value the affection of parents, and to know how much they are wrapped up in their children's welfare and happi-

ness ; it comes at an age when young people in a family should begin to realize that they are an integral part in the whole, and that it is their duty to give their share of work, to confer what happiness they can on the others, so that they may receive a corresponding return. There are some people, my daughter, who never arrive at that age, and you are one of them."

"Yes, mamma?" said Louise.

"Decidedly yes," said her mother. "But, fortunately, I have never let the happiness of my family depend upon any one member of it. Now, I shall not depend upon you to have my house appear as the house of Morton should. I shall introduce Miss Samson myself." And she went out of the room with a shade upon her brow.

"Yes, mamma," said this cold-blooded daughter, and sat down to sew bows on her slippers, as if nothing had occurred to disturb her tranquillity.

As to Patch, she was bothering her mother to death about Miss Samson. "Only think, mamma, she is going to wear a high-neck, square-front, white muslin, with open-laced sleeves, trimmed with blue ribbons. She says it is all she has. I have persuaded her to wear a rose in her hair, to help out her dress."

"And I have no doubt, my darling," said her mother, "that she will look as pretty as any one at the party. The girl has the most refined taste in everything, and the dress she came here in looked as if it had been made to fit a duchess. My child, you give me much pleasure in the interest you take in this young lady, for I can not tell you how my heart has gone out to her. She has moved recollections of twenty years ago, and brought before me one I loved very dearly. The more I see her the more the likeness grows upon me ; only she is much more beautiful than the one I remember."

"And," said Patch, "did you ever see such a likeness to Louise ? I wouldn't mention it to my sister for the world. I think she would split her own nose to look different."

"Yes, darling," said the mother, "the likeness to Louise is very great ; only she is Louise softened down and chastened—Louise as I would like to have her."

"You dear, sweet mamma, you ought to have everything in the world that you want," said Patch ; and she put her arms around her mother's neck, and kissed her a dozen times.

## CHAPTER XXX.

## MRS. MORTON'S PARTY.

ALL parties are pretty much alike, except that some are larger than others, the rooms more brilliantly lighted, and there is more music—which the reader, no doubt, will say makes all the difference in the world.

This is a fact, I believe, generally admitted, for without the music the company would likely soon desire to go home.

Then the lighting of a room has a great deal to do with the happiness of the evening. If the light is bad, there is a gloom over the whole company. Light should always be in the ascendancy at a party, no matter how small the entertainment may be.

I have heard of a Frenchman who, when asked what the first requisite of a party is, answered, light; what is the second, more light; what is the third, more light. He did not take into consideration at all the creature comforts of an entertainment. He thought that light makes up for all deficiencies—that is, increases the ardor for the intellectual, and makes conversation brisk.

No one is lively in a dark room; and that is why lovers, as a general rule, like to wander beneath the light of the moon and stars when not engaged in dancing. There must be just the right quantity of light to make the complexion of the ladies appear of a peach bloom—which, let me assure the reader, can not be obtained under the ghastly reflection of gas-light, but is only brought out under the rosy-colored light of the wax-candle.

If you want your party to be a great success, abolish gas, and fill every nook and corner with wax-candles, guarding against the falling of wax by an automatic arrangement.

The difference of one party from another is relatively as its square of intelligence is to the lightness of the company's heels—which will be found to pay the host or hostess better than if they had imported all the *savants* of Europe to the entertainment.

However small may be the entertainment, provided there are enough people present to entitle themselves to be called a dancing party, there will be found the same hopes, aspirations, jealousies, envy, malice, and all uncharitableness that one would expect to find in a first-class assembly: only all the above attributes of a first-class place of enjoyment are generally boiled down in a small crowd

to that particular degree of acerbity that gives everything a most piquant flavor. Mrs. Tartar and Mrs. Venom are never so much in their element as at one of these medium-sized parties, where everything can be seen and every word heard.

I am afraid Mrs. Morton's little party is not going to be a success. She is afraid so herself. She already sees a small storm brewing, and, although for the present it remains but a speck upon the horizon, there is no knowing how soon it may spread over the firmament, so easily can one uncertain member of a family produce discord, even when there is every reason why peace should prevail.

There were in this small assembly a good many elements of strife, which, though lying dormant at present, were only slumbering.

If any one could have looked into the hearts of the company, he would have been surprised to see the amount of deep under-current, of subtle cunning, envy, malice, and hatred, all hid beneath hearts that to all appearances were the gayest of the gay.

Is it not so in all great and small assemblies? Why, therefore, should Mrs. Morton's party be an exception?

Mrs. Morton went down early to see that everything was in order in the ball-room, an apartment arranged expressly for dancing and for concerts. It was a spacious, well-proportioned room, thirty-two feet wide by fifty feet long, with an arched ceiling, frescoed with a beautiful design, called "The Loves of the Angels," where those beautiful spirits were grouped about in the most pleasurable way, and seemed to be enjoying themselves immensely after their own fashion. The floor was made of the smoothest kind of wood, and well waxed. The windows that surrounded the room were French, cut down to the floor, to enable the evening breezes to circulate throughout the room. Then there was a pretty orchestra-stand, raised a few feet from the floor, fitted with a piano, and occupied by five musicians imported from New York. What more could be desired? Only gay hearts and light heels!

Mrs. Morton threw herself in one of the comfortable easy-chairs placed against the wall, and rested until the time came for the company to assemble. The musicians in the orchestra were playing some air, and Mrs. Morton was dreamily listening to it, when the door opened and Patch, dressed in the best she could muster among her torn white muslins, entered, leading in Mary Samson by one hand, and *Bene Trovato* by the other—the latter having been

allowed, owing to innumerable signs he made, to sit up and witness the ball.

As Mrs. Morton raised her head, this beautiful group presented itself, and at once drove all gloomy thoughts from her mind. What could be more charming? There was Mary, dressed in a simple white muslin, with a trifle of lace trimming on it, and ornamented with blue ribbon, while in her hair was a pale, pink rose, which Patch insisted on putting there. Her dress fitted her to perfection, showing her willowy, graceful figure to advantage. It was cut square in the neck, just sufficient to show the pure white skin of part of her full bust, while her perfectly rounded arms shone like the purest ivory through the lace open sleeves, with which they were covered to the wrists, while her tiny hands were hid from sight in a pair of white kid gloves.

There was Patch, with her angelic face, and with her dress put on in a manner that she calculated would make Mr. Berry Sharpe ask her for at least two dances. And she was sure of two more each from Mr. Deville and George May, and certainly one from Edgar Lane. But it was not certain that Patch would not hitch herself out of her low-necked dress before the evening was over.

There was *Bene Trovato*, with his beautiful black eyes and long, curling hair. What would you have more? What could make a lovelier group, to stand up with Mrs. Morton and receive the company, than this?

Mrs. Morton had no eyes for any one but Mary. Tears stood in her long lashes as she took the girl's hand and said: "You are very lovely, my child—I hope not so much so as to create envy; but stand by me, and I will introduce you as the guests come in. It is right that my daughter's companion should be properly presented as one of the family."

Mary looked her thanks with her dark, expressive eyes, and, taking one of Mrs. Morton's shapely hands in hers, kissed it affectionately.

As to Patch, she beamed all over as the company entered and her new friend was introduced to them. The guests that were introduced to Mary passed on, and paused a moment to look at her, as if she were an angel from the realms of bliss. "Who is she?" they all inquired. "Where did she come from? Of what family of Samsons is she?"

When Mrs. Eton and Flossy came in, and went up to pay their respects to Mrs. Morton, they stood stock still, quite out of breath

with amazement. "What does this mean?" said Flossy; "is this Louise in a new *rôle*?" And then she saw that this was not Louise, but an etherealized representation of her.

"Heavens, what a love of a girl!" exclaimed Mrs. Eton.

They both knew that Mrs. Morton expected a new teacher. Could this be the one? "Who is Miss Samson?" was on every tongue. As to the gentlemen, they were beside themselves with admiration. They could not keep their eyes off of Mary, and were all dying for the opportunity to ask her for a dance.

All the guests had assembled, as near as Mrs. Morton could tell, and she was about to send word to the musicians to commence a quadrille, when she remembered that Louise had not made her appearance.

Louise had determined on this evening to array herself in her most beautiful dress—an embroidered muslin, with elaborate lace trimmings, caught up in loops, and held by bouquets of moss-rose buds in French flowers. A large string of pearls inclosed her beautiful neck, and her toilet was finished off with all those tasteful accessories which a refined woman only knows how to use to advantage. She had waited till all the company had assembled, wishing to appear upon the scene like some bright meteor, and astonish all beholders.

She had not given a thought to the new-comer, Mary Samson. She did not know whether her brother was joking or not about her—whether she was as ugly as Sin, or as beautiful as Hebe. She hated that kind of cattle, as she expressed herself, and, as she traveled over the earth, she never looked at them, or let them interfere with her in any way. She laughed at her mother's fancy in taking this girl by the hand so suddenly, and introducing her at a dancing-party. "Papa will interfere with that arrangement," she said to herself. "He doesn't like *mésalliances*. He will relegate her to the school department or send her home. But pshaw!" she exclaimed; "why am I bothering about a piece of mamma's sentimentality, when I haven't got this patch of court-plaster on my cheek to suit me? There! that will do, it is just enough near the dimple to draw attention to it—a finger-post to woman's vanity!

"Well, what would the best of beauty be worth, if it were not for the little adornments we put on? I don't believe that beauty when unadorned is adorned the most. Imagine Miss Samson in a black traveling-silk, her only dress—bah! I wonder what the company will think of mamma's taste in the selection of her *protégées*.

She might have been satisfied in introducing into society two rather passable-looking daughters—that is, taking it for granted that Patch will some day have some flesh on her bones, and will get the kinks out of her.”

Then came a tap at the door, and a bouquet from Commander Conrad, with his compliments, and could he have the honor of taking Miss Morton into the ball-room! How her heart jumped! She had hoped this. What a pleasure to enter the ball-room with, to her taste, the handsomest and most *distinguished* man in the house!

She tripped down-stairs. “Oh, thanks,” she said; “this is an unexpected pleasure. In full uniform, and so becoming to you, if anything were wanted.”

He bowed low and offered his arm, and they went in together. All eyes were upon them—this splendid girl and the handsome officer.

“Take me,” she said, “to that sofa near the window at the middle of the room,” and she was about passing the spot where her mother stood with Mary Samson, when, casting her eyes in that direction, she saw a sight that took her breath away—Mary with all her wonderful beauty gazing at her, with a beauty equally as remarkable, and with an intensity any woman would be pleased with.

If a vision of heaven had come upon earth, Louise Morton could not have been more astonished. This was something more beautiful than she had ever dreamt of in her life. She had seen her own reflection in the glass, and it seemed to her that there was nothing more beautiful; and yet here was one in a simple muslin dress, pure white neck without an ornament, and she felt that Mary Samson was the lovelier of the two.

Her first impulse was to tear the string of pearls from her neck and scatter them upon the floor, for she saw that she had made a mistake in endeavoring to adorn a part of her person that without pearls was perfectly beautiful. She hesitated a moment as if she would move on and take no notice of the person before her, but, dropping Commander Conrad’s arm, and with her eye glittering with that steel-like look she could assume when she pleased, she walked up to the girl, who was regarding her with profound admiration.

“Is this,” she asked, “the Miss Samson we all thought to be an old spinster—the lady Harry described with red hair and false teeth, and a hand that would cover a ten-acre lot, and a figure like a shingle? How could Harry associate anything so beautiful with

something so absurd ! Yes," she continued, "you are beautiful, far too beautiful for one in your station ; but, Miss Samson, your beauty will prove a curse to you." And, falling back, she took Commander Conrad's arm, and walked off to the sofa she first desired to reach.

To describe Mrs. Morton's horror at this conduct would be impossible, nor would it be possible to depict Mary's mortification, who could scarcely realize that she was awake, and that all this was not a dream, she had been received with such affection by every one. She could not realize that a daughter of Mrs. Morton could deliberately insult her in the presence of her protector and the lookers-on. Her heart had gone out to Louise, and she was thinking: "This is certainly the most beautiful being I ever beheld ! What joy to be the companion to such a girl !" Her eyes filled with tears at the insult, though she preserved her dignity and self-possession.

"I need not tell you, my dear," said Mrs. Morton, her eyes filled with tears, "the mortification this has given me. But the rest of my family will amply make up to you for this unkind treatment. This is unusual in Louise, and she will make up for it hereafter."

"I am afraid, madam," said Mary, "that dislike such as this will prevent my remaining with you. I don't see how I could possibly have incurred it."

"Miss Samson," replied Mrs. Morton, "Louise has peculiar moods, but I am mistress in this establishment, and while you are under my protection no one shall treat you with disrespect."

"But," said Mary, "I want her to love me as I shall her, and I should feel miserable if I thought she would not like me in the end."

"You must take the world, my dear, as you find it. Many a home has a Louise Morton in it, the harmony of which would never be disturbed but for her. But that is no reason why persons whose fate it is to abide within it should give themselves any trouble to please characters so contradictory, or make themselves the least uncomfortable on their account. I depend a good deal on your example to influence my daughter. She must be won by you in time, and if you can overcome this temper of hers so far as to make her look upon you as her friend, you will place me under obligations that I can never repay."

"I will try my best," replied Mary ; "I can never repay the kindness you have shown to me."

There was one thing that mortified Mary Samson greatly—this



was the idea that Harry Morton had held her up to ridicule, had described her as a red-haired spinster, with false teeth and a hand big enough to cover a ten-acre lot! "Why should he have done that?" she thought. "I considered him so gentlemanly and refined; I felt even under obligations I could never repay for his kindness to me on board the boat."

"Perhaps," she thought, her face blushing deeply as the idea took possession of her mind, "he despises me because he thinks I had assumed a false name, and doesn't care what he says about me!"

Patch had gone up to her and put her arm around her waist, and, looking up at her face with her tearful eyes, she said: "You will think our family snobby after that performance of Louise's, won't you, Miss Samson? but you may believe what I tell you when I say that Louise is the only snob in the family. She is always doing snobby things, and always will. There's a screw loose in that girl's head, and if I don't give her a raking down this night—"

"Oh, don't, for mercy's sake," interrupted Mary, "ever mention the matter to her! Leave it to me and time to win her over and make a friend of her. I must have her love, and will obtain it in time. I have had some pupils very intractable, but I always won them over in the long run."

"The rhinoceros doesn't mate with the dove, nor the bear with the antelope, and the lion and the lamb do not lie down together, unless the lamb is inside the lion," said Patch, looking very wise after delivering herself of this speech; "and I'll see," she said, "that she doesn't behave so again. I know things about her she's afraid I'll tell; she knows with whom to mind her p's and q's."

The gentlemen all came up one after another to ask Miss Samson to dance, but she declined all invitations. At last Mr. Deville asked her if she would walk about and sit out a cotillion, which invitation she accepted, and they finally found a seat and entered into conversation. He found her highly cultivated, much more so than himself, and she expressed herself simply and clearly on all matters connected with painting, music, and poetry—the subjects he had selected for opening the conversation.

The generous-hearted Deville had seen the manner in which she had been treated by Louise Morton, and he felt mortified that a woman to whom he had given his love should play such a part, and hence he determined to show Mary that he appreciated her beauty and talents.

There was something about Mary so winning that he felt drawn toward her at once, not with anything like the feelings of love, but with a brotherly sentiment that made him desire to watch over and protect her.

In half an hour he felt that he had known her a life-time. She carried her character on her face, where any one would soon read the purity that filled her heart.

Deville's impulses were all noble ; he always wanted to protect the weak ; and, without trying to know more of Mary's history than she chose to impart of her own free will, he was deeply anxious to know all about her.

He had given his heart to Louise Morton the first time he saw her, and he felt then that he would never change. He knew her faults, and was often wounded by her sarcasms, but, faithful Newfoundland as he was, he would bear a blow from his mistress and then kiss the hand that gave it.

She might drive a dagger into his body, and he would draw it out and use it in her defense. He loved that grand beauty of hers with an adoration unequalled, and though he had no certainty that she would ever consent to be his wife, yet he would be true to her to the end, no matter what happened.

"Look at James Deville," said Louise to Commander Conrad ; "how devoted he is to this new face, which seems to have so fascinated all you gentlemen ! It seems to me that after drinking champagne it must seem like milk and water to him."

"What do you mean, Miss Morton ?"

"I mean," she answered, her eyes flashing, "that he has been my obedient slave for the last six months, and now he is drinking at this fresh stream of water as if he had never drunk before."

"Perhaps," said the commander, "it is because it is fresh that he drinks. Don't you think, Miss Morton, that you were very ungenerous to that poor girl, in speaking to her the way you did ? She is very beautiful, no doubt, but you with your gorgeous beauty can afford to let others possess a small modicum of that most desirable article, without noticing those who worship at another shrine."

"Do you find fault with me, too ?" exclaimed Louise ; "I am already suffering under my mother's displeasure, and no doubt she will send me to bed without my supper ! If Commander Conrad should find me wanting, and should withdraw his countenance, I should be beggared indeed. I should not be surprised to see you worshipping at the shrine yourself."

"No," was the reply, "I desire to worship at no other shrine than this ; but I am quite sure you are too noble and generous to wish to hurt the feelings of a young person, one who is a dependent, and who would not likely stay here if she could not meet with your approbation."

"What an able advocate of this young dependent you are !" she said sarcastically. "Commander Conrad, I wish you to understand that I am not generous ; so, if you have formed any such foolish idea, you had better dismiss it. If you are so much interested in that young person, you had better join Mr. Deville and Mr. Vere Saye, who both seem perfectly fascinated with her."

"Yet," said Conrad, "their fascination seems to me to consist more of a very friendly feeling. To judge from the expressions of their faces, they are amused at her *naïveté*."

Louise's humor was not to be overcome. It actually hurt her, she was so ill-tempered ; but there were certain conventionalities she felt obliged to preserve to keep up the character of a lady, and she did not want to lose the good opinion of the man that had so fascinated her.

She felt that he was one who would not sacrifice his feelings of right or wrong to a woman, even if he were in love with her ; that he was a man with a will of his own, and would assert it ; and that she was running great risk of losing not only his good opinion but his company, in persisting in a course which even to herself appeared contemptible.

"Let us drop the subject," she said ; "we can't agree, and it is not pleasant to me to continue it."

"I have an inherent dislike to injustice," he replied, "come from what quarter it may, and I should be sorry to lose the high opinion I have formed of your character, by thinking you would make a point of persecuting a young lady who seems to meet the approbation of every one, and particularly to enjoy the good opinion of Mrs. Morton."

"Young lady !" laughed Louise scornfully. "How do you know she is a young lady ? Who knows where she came from, or who she is ?"

"There is always a stamp that marks the coin," he responded. "There is a nobility about that girl that no one can mistake. She has beauty, purity of character, and intelligence, marked in every line of her countenance, or I am no judge of human nature. Excuse me, Miss Morton, for being so persistent in wishing you to look

upon this matter differently, but I don't wish to appeal in vain to your sense of justice."

"It strikes me, Commander Conrad," said Louise, with her most steely expression, "that, considering you have only known me three days, you take undue liberties in undertaking to regulate my conduct."

"Perhaps I do," he said; "but you are too beautiful to be anything but just. Nature never intended that so rich a casket should contain anything but a heart full of the noblest impulses."

"You had better go and cast yourself at Miss Samson's feet at once," rejoined Louise; "you may find a casket there full of all the virtues you are in search of"; and here she cast down her eyes, and began to pull her shawl-fringe to pieces in vexation. She never looked more beautiful than she did at this moment, and so thought Conrad. He had not known Louise Morton long enough to understand her fully. He looked upon her as a beautiful spoiled heiress, who would in time, under the contact of a firm will, develop into a glorious woman.

"I have no desire, Miss Morton," he said, "to cast myself at Miss Samson's feet. If I cast myself at any one's feet here, it will not be hers." And he looked at Louise in a manner not to be mistaken.

"You think her very beautiful, do you not?" she inquired.

"I do," he replied; "but I should not feel justified in letting her suppose I thought so—she is a dependent, and entitled to my sympathy and respect, and I should consider that any man would be acting an unmanly part in paying her unnecessary compliments. I don't think she is one who would permit such a thing, no matter how much she would like any one, while she occupied her present position under your mother's roof."

"You seem to have acquired considerable knowledge of her in the short time you have been in this room," said Louise sarcastically.

"Yes, I read human nature at a glance. I have traveled much, and have come in close contact with all kinds of people. I read people as I read a book; there are few so astute that I can not penetrate them."

"Then, pray, Commander Conrad, what has your reading of me led you to think?"

"That you are beautiful, and that implies everything; for I could not think you beautiful if I thought you had faults."

"Yet you have been taking me to task?"

"If you think it taking you to task," said Conrad, "because I take so deep an interest in you that I do not wish you to accuse yourself hereafter of an injustice, so be it, but let me assure you you are the only woman in the world that I take that much interest in."

"And if I agree," said Louise, "to be what you call more generous to this girl, what then?"

"Then I shall think you more beautiful than ever."

"You are the only man I ever knew that I would concede that much to."

"And you are the only woman I would attempt to obtain such a victory from, for it is a victory that assures me your heart is in the right place."

Louise felt better after having given in, though she did it with a poor grace. She saw evidently that she had to do with a man of a most persistent will, who, whatever might be his admiration for her, would not sacrifice a single principle to cater to her prejudices.

He managed her with the same coolness he would manage his ship when in a dangerous position. He never let her get from under his influence; yet, notwithstanding her apparent tractability for fear she should lose a lover, she determined to hate Mary Samson worse than ever.

Whenever Louise cast her eyes around she would find a fresh devotee at the shrine of Mary Samson. Now George May had joined the other two men, while Patch was sitting with her arm through hers and gazing up into her face, the little *Bene Trovato* lying with head in her lap, and holding on to the hand of Deville, whom he still clung to as his friend.

Edgar Lane had determined at first not to be present at the party, but the lights and the music were too potent for him, and he was so miserable that he determined to go in and look upon Louise in all her loveliness, even if he met with nothing but disappointment and black looks.

After paying his respects to Mrs. Morton, she said, "Edgar, come with me and be introduced to Miss Samson."

He, like the others, was amazed at the likeness to Louise. "It is her," he said, "etherealized." He loved Louise Morton with all his soul, but he knew all her faults. She had been his little tyrant for years, and from the time she was thirteen she had led him a willing captive. He looked around the room for her. She was sitting on a sofa, still with Commander Conrad, with her eyes cast

down, and lending a willing ear to his flattering professions. Edgar felt as if a dagger had been driven into his heart.

He had not spoken to her for four days—an age to him ; and now, whenever he saw her, she was with Commander Conrad.

He determined to speak to her that night if it cost him his life. So he walked over to where she sat, and stood before her, pale, hollow-eyed, and heart-stricken.

She started when she saw him, and for a moment her heart smote her, but the cold glitter came into her eyes, and Edgar felt that his fate was sealed. He saw no sympathy there, and his heart sank within him.

“ I am going to New York in the morning, Miss Morton,” he said ; “ have you any commissions for me to execute ? ”

“ None,” she said coldly, and turned to talk to Commander Conrad. Edgar staggered away, scarcely able to control himself, and rushed out into the open air, where he could breathe freely. Wandering away to the old oak, he sat there with his head between his hands until late at night. He saw that she no longer loved him, if she had ever done so. Indeed, she treated him as if she hated him, him to whom she promised eternal fidelity in days never to come again.

“ Who is that interesting-looking young man ? ” said Conrad to Louise. “ He seems agitated, and as if he had lately recovered from a fit of illness.”

“ It is one of my father’s dependents ; a knight of the plume,” was the reply. “ I did not notice his looks.”

But Conrad noticed that he was more than ordinarily agitated, and he pondered over it. But he was becoming hourly more infatuated with the beauty of this strange girl, and he delighted to show the ascendancy he was gaining over her, for it was quite evident she had given up every one else for his society.

George May had become disgusted with all the world. Louise never so much as looked at him and Deville, and he determined to leave, in disregard of all his friends could say to the contrary. So he bade Mrs. Morton good-night, saying that he would leave in the morning.

She saw how the case stood and sighed, but said nothing. She knew that the best remedy for the heart-ache was for him to leave. She felt for him, and that he had been badly treated by her daughter ; but that was a woman’s privilege—*que voulez-vous ?*

The party was a failure as regarded giving any one pleasure—

there were so many disappointments. Toward the end of the evening Flossy and Mrs. Eton, with Harry Morton, joined the group where Mary Samson was sitting, and they made it lively ; but Harry noticed that she never once looked at him, and seemed determined to avoid him. He made several remarks to her, but she simply answered with a monosyllable, and did not notice him further.

"What can it mean?" he asked himself; and that night he, too, went to bed with a sore heart.

The only persons who seemed to pass the evening without any *contretemps* were Miss Bane and Mr. Slings, the master. He had been very assiduous in his attentions to her since the first day when he handed her in to dinner. He had indeed made a great impression on Miss Bane, and had drawn from her the story of her early love, and how near she came being married to one who had become a thriving candle-maker; how, instead of marrying her, the said candle-maker went to another house in the same street, and married another woman whose initials were the same as hers! that she should always think it a mistake, and that the poor man—a Mr. Blotch—did not find it out for some time, and she forgave him if he ever did wake up to the reality of his position; for he had, she believed, caught a Tartar, his wife's hair being of a carrotty red.

Miss Bane did not often make these confidences, and it was very touching to hear her. She assured Mr. Slings that it was a great loss to society when Mr. Blotch got the other woman instead of her; that *she* would have made a great ornament to society, whereas Mrs. Blotch was a cross, peevish woman, with sore eyes and no style, and had a baby every eleventh month, which she felt sure she never would have been guilty of. She told Mr. Slings how near she came to being a millionaire, and how much Blotch lost by not marrying her. She had bought a four-acre lot just outside of Albany, for which she had paid the sum of five hundred dollars. Blotch advised her to buy it—that if the city went out in that direction she would realize a large fortune. She believed that originally Blotch was after that lot and not her, and he got punished for his perfidy by making a mistake and marrying another woman.

"To think, Mr. Slings, that she who should have laid her head on Blotch's bosom, and been the mother of his children, has lived to reward his treachery as it deserves! I have heaped hot coals upon his head, and let him use my four-acre lot near Albany to feed his cow on. Had the city gone out toward my lot I should have been a millionaire; as it is, it only serves to feed my revenge and Blotch's

cow. I wasn't sure there wasn't a mistake, and I've always thought Blotch got a little how-come-you-so, and slept in the wrong bosom by going into the wrong house at the wrong time, and the result is he feeds his cow on my lot, and I work winter socks for his children. I do hear Mrs. Blotch is very weakly, and having ten children she isn't able to take care of them."

"Well," said Mr. Slings, "but your life, mum, has been a eventful one, and if you've kept a log-book, and all the events of the watches is marked down in regular order, with position from noon to noon, force of wind, temperature of water, height of barometer, and all that, it would make a very interesting book."

"I expect, Mr. Slings," said Miss Bane, "that your life has been a very eventful one. You sailors, they say, have a sweetheart in every port. Fie, Mr. Slings, why don't you get married?"

"It ain't my fault, I assure you," said Mr. Slings; "I have been trying it on for the last ten years. In the war of 1812 I lost my arm in battle, when I was engaged to Miss Euphemia Crank, and, when I came home a hero, I expected to lead her right to the nuptial altar; but she seemed to find fault with my one arm on the ground that I could no longer hold a hank of yarn in my two hands for her to reel-off by, and she said she couldn't get on with a man of that kind; that she should miss my services, as I was the best reeler-off she ever met with, except Mr. Sprawgle, who had been very useful to her all the war, and she had accepted him conditionally, providing I didn't come home whole, because she couldn't abide a piece of a man anyhow.

"Then she married Mr. Sprawgle, and I danced at the wedding and presented the bride with her wedding-veil. I then went to sea, and never went to sleep without thinking of her. I had her virgin name, 'Euphemia Crank,' put up in my state-room. It was framed in copper thimbles taken from the store-room, and I got the ship's painter to paint a likeness of Euphemia, after my description of her, and I put it in an oak frame and crossed two sewing-mallets on the top, with two shark's hooks and chains festooned underneath."

"How touching!" exclaimed Miss Bane.

"Yes, it *was* touching," said Slings. "Mr. Sprawgle died the very day I got home from a cruise, and I hastened to the funeral and acted as chief pall-bearer, and as soon as the mourners returned from the grave I sent my name up to Euphemia and she admitted me. She looked beautiful in her woe, and I threw myself upon my knees before her and offered her my heart and hand.



“‘Too late, Slings, my friend,’ she said; ‘I was engaged yesterday, an hour after Mr. Sprawgle died. Mr. Putty saw my grief and sympathized with me, and we are to be married the first of May. I thought of your claims, my dear Slings, but then the want of that arm! and I found it would be too inconvenient.’ ‘But,’ said I, ‘since the introduction of the patent yarn-reeler it needs not have a man.’ ‘Very true,’ she replied, ‘but I am so fond of boating, and if the boat should capsize you could not swim with two—me and yourself.’ ‘That’s true,’ said I, and she married Putty. A year after, Putty took her out a-sailing; the boat capsized and Putty was drowned, but she floated ashore, kept up by her bustle.

“I had the river dragged for Putty’s body, and found it and had it borne home on a stretcher. I laid the body at her feet, and she looked more beautiful in her woe than ever. I laid my hand and heart at her feet on the spot, but she sighed and said: ‘Oh! too late again, Slings. I accepted Mr. Jump only five minutes ago, and we are to be married the first of May. The loss of that arm, dear Slings, still stood in the way. You couldn’t do a fair job in cutting wood with one arm, and I thought it a duty I owed myself to take a man with two arms. Jump swings a beautiful axe.’

“I sympathized with her and danced at her wedding, and went to sea for six months to get over my disappointment. On my return I went right up to Euphemia’s house, and as I approached the door I heard shrieks of woe. I rushed in and found that Jump had cut his foot off while chopping wood, and was bleeding to death. ‘O Slings!’ she cried, ‘run for the doctor,’ and she looked more beautiful than ever in her tears of woe. ‘Before I go,’ said I, ‘tell me if Jump dies will you accept my hand and heart?’ ‘Oh, cruel man!’ she said, ‘you will let him die before my eyes!’ I rushed off for the doctor, who passed me on some other street, and reached the house just in time to close Jump’s eyes. I rushed up-stairs to Euphemia. ‘My hand and heart is yours,’ I said; ‘take me quick!’ ‘Ah, dear Slings, too late again. Dr. Leech was with me in my affliction; he poured oil into my bruised heart, and I gave him my hand just as my Jump passed away.”

“The shameless hussy!” exclaimed Miss Bane; “to treat a man of your faithful heart so, after being true so many years. Oh, if Blotch had only been as true to me! I could die for a true man.”

There is no knowing whether Miss Bane would not have died then and there, if the music had not struck up “Home, sweet home,” in sign that the evening entertainment was over.

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